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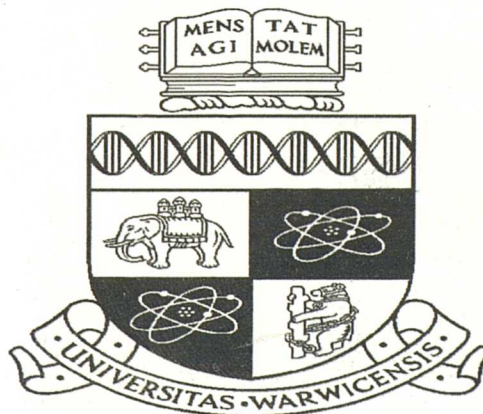
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# Teamwork and the Structure of Representation

at Vauxhall Ltd. (UK) & Adam Opel AG (Germany)



*School of Industrial & Business Studies*

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of the degree of *philosophiae doctor* Ph.D. in the School of  
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**Dedication**

*for Lisa*

& the workers on Vauxhall's  
and Opel's assembly lines

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# Abbreviations

AEEU	Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union
BetrVG	Works Constitution Act ( <i>Betriebsverfassungsgesetz</i> )
BR	Works Council ( <i>Betriebsrat</i> )
BV	Works Agreement ( <i>Betriebsvereinbarung</i> )
DGB	German Trade Union Federation ( <i>Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund</i> ),
EETPU	Electrical, Electronic, Telecommunication and Plumbing Union
EI	Employee Involvement
GM	General Motors
GME	General Motors Europe
IBC	Isuzu-Bedford-Commercial Vehicles
IGM	German Metal Workers Union ( <i>Industriegewerkschaft Metall</i> )
IMVP	International Motor Vehicle Programme
IR	Industrial Relations
JCC	Joint Consultative Committee
JPC	Joint Plant Committee
JSSC	Joint Shop Steward Committee
MSF	Manufacturing, Science and Finance Union
OB	Organisational Behaviour
QNPS	Quality Network Production System
SOS	Standard Operation Sheet
TGWU	Transport and General Workers Union
TPS	Toyota Production System
VK	Workplace Representative Body ( <i>Vertrauenskörper</i> )
VKL	Workplace Representative Committee ( <i>Vertrauenskörperleitung</i> )
VP	Workplace Representative ( <i>Vertrauensperson</i> )

\*English translations of German terms follow the "European Employment and Industrial Relations Glossary" (Weiss 1992).

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# Abstract

**Teamwork, participation** and the structure of representation are the core issues of this thesis. The aim is to show how an **industrial relations (IR)** system shapes the introduction of teamwork and defines the introduction of teamleaders and teamspeakers, and how these teamleaders/teamspeakers affect the structure of representation. To evaluate this, organisational behaviour theories of teamwork, leadership styles and industrial relations models (*unitarism, pluralism, adversarialism*) are applied. Since the introduction of teamwork into an existing manufacturing plant represents a transition from a worker-supervisor system to a team-based system, a theory of democracy and collective bargaining is used to evaluate the outcome of such a transition. In contrast to a worker-supervisor system on the shopfloor, teamwork involves either a management-appointed teamleader or an elected teamspeaker. Both cases have certain consequences for the structure of representation on the shopfloor.

This research was designed to answer the question: *To what extent and in what ways does the institutional context affect the transition from a traditional system of representation to teamwork and how does this affect the structure of representation?* Two detailed case studies have been conducted in the motor-car industry, using surveys and interviews. One of the case studies was carried out at Vauxhall's Luton (UK) plant, the other at Adam Opel AG in Germany. Both plants are subsidiaries of **General Motors** which introduced teamwork as part of their *Quality Network Production System* in the early 1990s, modelled on MIT's **lean production**. In one plant (Vauxhall) there was an *adversarial* IR system, resulting in an appointment model: in the other there was a *pluralist* IR system which led to an election model. The effects of an elected teamspeaker or an appointed teamleader on the structure of representation have been examined.

The thesis argues that an existing IR system shapes the introduction of appointed teamleaders or elected teamspeakers. The findings of the case studies and the survey results indicate that appointed teamleaders tend to adopt an authoritarian leadership style and are not seen as representatives by team-members (Vauxhall). In other words, the outcome of a transition taking place in an *adversarial* IR system is *adversarial*; management, teamleaders and team-members still view each other as *us and them*. In contrast to this, a *pluralist* IR system tends to favour the election of teamspeakers, who are seen as representatives. Consequently, the structure of representation in a *pluralist* IR context supports *pluralism* as an outcome and strengthens its capacity for problem-solving; while the structure of representation in the *adversarial* IR case increases the *adversarial* nature of the system and further weakens its capability for problem-solving.

# 1. Introduction

Industrial production incorporates technical production concepts which have shaped the social organisation of work. Ford's development of a moving assembly line and the standardisation of products and components had a strong impact on work in much the same way as Taylor's division of labour forced workers to assemble only parts of a product. In this system workers were separated from each other and closely monitored by supervisors. Shopfloor relations were defined not only by a separation of thinking, planning, and execution, etc. but also by a worker-supervisor structure. Aware of the inhuman and impersonal aspects of assembly line work, many attempts were made to *humanise* industrial assembly-based production concepts. One such attempt was the introduction of teamwork, developed and studied by the British Tavistock Institute in the 1950s. While in the 1970s teamwork became increasingly popular with government supported *Quality of Life* projects in Germany. The failure of these projects brought an end to teamwork, which has never been widely introduced as a form of production organisation.

With the arrival of Japanese plants, the so-called *transplants*, in the USA and in Great Britain, Western car manufacturers experienced not only competition because of imported cars from Japan but also Japanese production in their home countries. Given this threat, the motor-car industry ordered an intensive study of the Japanese production system developed by Toyota. MIT's study resulted in a much cited book on the car industry. "Within one year no less than about 50 new management science books carrying the title *lean production* were published in Germany and the IG Metall organised a conference on that subject" (Deutschmann 1995:97). The MIT research introduced the term *lean production* to describe the organisation of workers in teams and saw it as one of the crucial advantages of the Japanese. On the basis of increased competition from Japanese manufacturers, plant closures and the MIT research findings, Western motor-car companies started introducing teamwork. One of the early and most intensive examples of the introduction of teamwork occurred at GM both in

the USA and in Europe. Vauxhall in the UK and Opel in Germany which also introduced a reorganisation of production away from the supervisor-worker system to a teamwork system in the early 1990s.

As in other companies, GM's teams were headed by either an appointed teamleader or an elected teamspeaker. Whether or not teamleaders were appointed or elected did not - it seems - depend on the free choice of management, but on the structure of the existing IR system. Since European car plants exist in different IR systems within each country and within each company, Europe displayed a patch-work of different IR systems and different teamwork approaches. Companies displayed a different approach to the selection of teamleaders not only in different countries, but also between different plants in one country (GM-Opel in Rüsselsheim differs from GM-Eisenach).

Apart from the rather rare example where a new plant is constructed at so-called *green-field* sites like GM's German Eisenach plant (Mickler et al. 1994), in most cases teamwork was introduced into an already existing plant (*brown-field* site). As such, teamwork has been introduced into car plants where production and representation patterns were already organised long before teamwork arrived. One such example was the existence of a supervisor system at Vauxhall and at Opel. Under the old system, supervisors played a managerial role in controlling workers. In contrast to supervisors, whose role was to oversee and monitor workers, teamleaders were required to represent team-members. Whether elected by a team or appointed by management, teamleaders or teamspeakers were conceived as having representative functions; this created a new structure of representation additional to that of unions, works councils, and workplace representatives.

The transition to a new model of this sort obviously affected industrial democracy on the shopfloor in different ways. The concept of management-appointed teamleaders differs widely from that of election by team-members. In the former case teamleaders' loyalty will tend to be influenced by management because of their appointment, while

the loyalty of an elected teamspeaker will tend to be with the team-members who elect them; i.e. teamleaders and teamspeakers relate differently to their organisational environment and to the structure of representation. It is the existence of these two different organisational forms that lead to the research question: *To what extent and in what ways does the institutional context affect the transition from a traditional system of representation to teamwork and how does this affect the general structure of representation?*

The two systems of elections and appointments have consequences for representation structures; because of this one appointment case (Vauxhall) and one election case (Opel) are part of the comparative case study. These two detailed case studies have been supported by a short questionnaire investigating both the affects of teamwork on representation and on the sort of change in social relations that the organisation undergoes when teamwork is introduced. In order to compare *apples* (appointed teamleaders) with *pears* (elected teamspeakers), a comparable framework (*fruits*) has to be used. Since Vauxhall's IR systems and team-concept differs from Opel's IR systems and team-concept, only a theory of industrial democracy and representation can compare both. In other words, the *fruits* of the research must be a general theory of collective bargaining and democracy. If it is the case that existing IR systems and structures of representation have defined the shape of Opel's and Vauxhall's team-concept, a theory needs to be developed to predict outcomes on the basis of a study of the two IR systems and the two structures of representation.

Moore's theory of transition (1966) has some implications here because it is based on an examination of the social conditions which define outcomes after a period of transition. He argues that in the case of nation states some reach modernity without developing a democratic system, while others develop a non-democratic systems. What determines the outcome is not the transtion itself but the pre-existing conditions, i.e. the existence or absence of feudalism. Walton and McKersie's theory of collective bargaining negotiations (1965) is also useful in examining outcomes in an IR context.

While Moore's theory was developed as a societal model, Walton and McKersie's theory has its origins in IR and applies directly to collective bargaining negotiations, i.e. examining the existing IR system and its affects outcomes: *integrative bargaining*, *distributive bargaining* and *collusion*. It can equally be argued that a move from a supervisor-worker system to a teamleader-member system leads to different outcomes under different conditions. Along with the theory of democracy the IR concepts of *unitarism* (*collusion*), *pluralism* (*integrative bargaining*), and *adversarialism* (*distributive bargaining*) can be usefully used to examine the outcomes. An IR system of representation clearly must change with the introduction of teamwork. Both a theory of transition and the triadic IR approach can be utilised by analysing the IR system of at least one organisation which has had a non-democratic outcome and an alternative system which resulted in a democratic outcome. The affect of teamleaders on the structure of representation can be analysed and compared. For example, if an IR system is based on a) *pluralism* (*integrative bargaining*), the possible outcome of a transition to teamwork is likely to be an election of teamspeakers. As in the other two cases: b1) *non-democratic* (*adversarial*), or b2) *non-democratic* (*unitarism*) the outcome is likely to be non-democratic, this will mean a management appointed teamleader.

If the IR system and the method of selecting teamleaders influence each other, the affect of teamleaders and teamspeakers on the structure of representation can be analysed using organisational behaviour theories of groups, teams, and leadership styles. The second problem to be addressed is whether or not teamleaders who are appointed by management will tend to be loyal to management and are likely therefore to adopt a different leadership style compared to elected teamspeakers whose loyalty will be directed to their teams. Leadership styles will not only define a teamleader's relationship to team-members but will also influence the structure of representation itself. The crucial question is therefore: *who represents team-members best*, is it the teamleader or the teamspeaker, or the more traditional forms of representation, e.g. stewards, workplace representatives, works councils members, etc.

**Chapter**

# **2**

## **Research Questions Hypotheses & Theory**



## 2. Teamwork, Industrial Relations & Industrial Democracy

The following chapter will examine teamwork in the light of a) organisational behaviour (the sociology of groups and teams and leadership theory and b) industrial relations (IR) and industrial democracy theory using the transitional and the triadic model. In sociological definitions of teamwork, teams and groups are seen as different structures in an organisational arrangement. Teams therefore are not a synonym for groups. However, both teams and groups have leaders. Since the present thesis is on representation, the issue of *teamleader* or *groupleader* and whether or not they are elected by team-members or appointed by management is crucial for exploring the issue of representation and issues of industrial democracy.

The *triadic approach* to IR distinguishes three approaches: a) unitarism, b) pluralism, and c) *adversarialism*. This model is used in the following ways: a) actors in the field of IR use one of three approaches as a *frame of reference* (Fox 1973:205), b) an *approach* or a *system* of IR is used (Bean 1985:2) to describe existing characteristics, elements or patterns and c) as an *intellectual interpretation* of reality is used (Clegg 1975, Hyman 1978, Poole 1982). The three approaches are applied in the thesis to the introduction of teamleaders/teamspeakers into the workplace and to transitional issues.

In order to examine the transition from a traditional system of representation to a team based system of representation, some theory of transition is necessary. There are parallels between the theory of transitions and the IR triadic model. While the IR model uses unitarism and *adversarialism* for a non-democratic system and pluralism for a democratic system, Moore similarly uses dictatorship and communism for a non-democratic system, democracy for a democratic system. Both Moore and Walton and McKersie's theory can be adapted to analyse the affect of teamwork and the role of teamleaders/teamspeakers as it has developed in different IR systems.

## 2.1. The Theory of Teams & Industrial Democracy

In order to investigate the issue of teamleaders/teamspeakers, it will be necessary to examine the difference between *groups* and *teams*, the nature of leadership styles and how the selection procedure of teamleaders/teamspeakers (i.e. appointment/election). affects the whole pattern of industrial democracy and IR.

### 2.1.1. Theories of Teams & Groups

Both teams and groups can be defined as a "number of people who (a) interact with each other, (b) are psychologically aware of each other, and (c) perceive themselves to be a group" (Buchanan & Huczynski 1985:131). Both can also be described as *membership groups* (Luthans 1985:362), because they consist of a defined and regulated membership. The performance of tasks is also a crucial element for manufacturing groups, because often, that is the reason for their existence: they are "formally designed to work on a specific project or job. Their interaction and structure are formally designed to accomplish the task" (Luthans 1985:362). The manufacturing teams studied in this thesis are primarily and necessarily *task groups*, because their existence is based on the task of assembling cars.

While Kirsch argues that teamwork is working in a *loose group* or *Arbeit im Raumverband* (Kirsch 1993:19) many authors distinguish a difference between *teams* and *groups*. Katzenbach & Smith (1993:60) state: "No group ever becomes a team until it can hold itself accountable as a team". Their analysis differentiates between: *workgroups*, *real teams*, and *high-performance teams*. *High-performance teams* are extremely rare in the motor-car industry. The important distinction then for this thesis is

that between *teams* and *groups*. In a workgroup members share information, perspectives, and insights however manufacturing teams on assembly lines usually do little more than share information. Management, on the other hand, define these *groups*, which have a very limited function, as *teams*. In many cases, attempts to shift responsibility to the groups are made without giving them any degree of autonomy or training for autonomy. No attempt is made to define team coherence or accountability. In contrast to *workgroups*, teams should share responsibility among team-members and also perform a number of other functions as demonstrated clearly by Katzenbach & Smith's table (1993: 214):

Table 2.1.: Workgroups and Teams

<b>Workgroups</b>	<b>Real Teams</b>
<b><i>Strong, clearly focused leader</i></b>	<b><i>Shared leadership roles</i></b>
Individual accountability	Individual and mutual accountability
The group's and the broader purpose is the same	Specific team purpose the team itself delivers
Individual work-products	Collective work-products
Runs efficient meetings	Encourages open discussion & active problem-solving meetings
Measures its effectiveness indirectly by its influence on others	Measures performance, directly by assessing collective work-products
Discusses, decides, and delegates	Discusses, decides, and does real work together

Katzenbach & Smith's definition of *real teams* argues that responsibility is distributed throughout the team. Manufacturing workgroups in the motor-car industry on the other hand generally have strong leaders who are expected to take overall responsibility. Another important distinction between *workgroups* and *teams* has also been used in terms of the work-product. While teams, as a result of their collective effort, produce a complete product or a modular product (an engine, or a complete cockpit for a car), *workgroups* always have a Tayloristic fragmentation tasks approach. In short, no group can ever be a team, but all teams have surpassed the stage of being a group. It seems, then, that the term *workgroup* is a more appropriate label for teams in the car industry because such a group certainly never reaches the level of *real teams* in terms of autonomy or coherence.

## 2.1.1.1. Autonomy

Handy (1988:179) sees the necessity of being in control of decision-making procedures as crucial to team autonomy and argues that the selection procedure itself will affect the way decisions are made. Decisions he argues can be made in different ways: "Decision by authority; decision by majority; decision by consensus; decision by minority; decision by no response". Decision by majority is the typical process in a team when teamspeakers are elected, because their very existence is based on a majority decision. Decisions by consensus are also likely to result in elected teamspeakers. A distinction needs to be made between *autonomous* and *semi-autonomous* teams, the former have total decision-making power; the latter have much less power to make decisions (Versteeg 1990, Rubenowitz 1992, Schuring 1992). However, since no group in IR organisations is totally autonomous, all manufacturing teams tend to be *conditional* or *semiautonomous*. "There are, nevertheless, several dimensions and degrees of autonomy" (Trist 1981:32).

Gulowsen (1979) was particularly interested in the autonomy of teams as one of their essential characteristics and developed the hypothesis that industrial democracy increases with the degree of autonomy given to the team. On the basis of this assumption, he developed a *9-item-scale* as a measurement of autonomy which Berggren (1992:96) applied to the motor-car industry. The following study will draw on his scale of items which examines the following areas of their level of autonomy: 1. the selection of the teamleader, 2. new members on the team, 3. distribution of work within the team, 4. time flexibility, 5. acceptance of additional work, 6. representation outside the team (i.e. teamleaders directly approach management without having to go through supervisors), 7. methods of production, 8. production goals (output), 9. production goals (quality):

Table 2.2.: Levels of Participation

1	2	3	4
No participation by a team	Team participates in decisions	Co-decision-making	Autonomous team decision
Is the total control of management. Management makes decisions and teams operate. Teams have no power on decision-making and no participation. A team-member remains within a "foreman-worker" structure.	Teams have some input to their work and can make suggestions, can request and discuss issues with management or supervisors. The voice of teams is heard, but teams have no power for co-decision-making, which remains in the hands of management.	Is the stage which teams can really influence issues by co-decision-making. Teams can reach decisions with management as an equal partner. The decision-making power given to teams by management can be seen as a sign of trust leading to "real teamwork" (Katz-enbach & Smith 1993).	Indicates management's full trust in teams. They can reach decisions without management. Teams are autonomous and accepted as full and equal partners. The closer the nine items on Gulowsen's scale reach level 4, the more a team has achieved the status of a real team.

## 2.1.1.2. Teams and Teamleaders

Not only the method of teamleader's selection, but also the relationship between teamleaders and teams is pivotal. When the teamleader is elected by the team there are particular reasons for this and these reasons will affect the relationship with the team. They are often "elected by their peers, because they score highly in performing tasks and the socio-emotional category" (Brown 1993:72). It seems that a teamleader is usually a group member who possesses more status (and power) compared to most other team-members (Brown 1993:51). A leader can be a *task-specialist* (Ribeaux 1978:280) or a *socio-emotional specialist* (Luthans 1985:484).

Whatever the reason for selection, the *elected* teamspeaker is less likely to experience conflict with team norms than an appointed one but more likely to face conflict from external pressures. The relationship between elected teamspeakers and their teams will therefore tend to "fit well with a democratic culture, with representative systems" (Handy 1988:183), and this will establish a model of democratic leadership, member participation, and overall co-operation. Under democratic leadership there tends to be personal and friendly relations among members, little scapegoating of individuals and

a consistent work level; even when the leader is absent the group continues to produce good results.

White and Lippitt (1960) in a classic study of leadership in 1943, distinguish between *autocratic*, *democratic*, and *laissez-faire* leaders, but focus their study on democratic leadership (Brown 1993:70, Smith et al. 1984:163). According to White and Lippitt, a group's reaction to an *autocratic leader* might result in either an aggressive or an apathetic outcome (Luthans 1985:476). Such leaders also tend not to interact openly. Teams who have an autocratic leader are left with two options: a) to fight against teamleaders or b) ignore them. In a *democratic leadership* style, both options are less likely because conflicts are more likely to be solved within the team. Appointed teamleaders do not necessarily need to be autocratic, but since they are not elected, they are less likely to be answerable to a team and more likely to be loyal to management. White and Lippitt also describe a *laissez-faire leader*, whose characteristics are nowhere found in the motor-car industry.

A leader can be defined as a person who "influences others in the group more than they themselves are influenced" (Brown 1993:67). To build a leader-follower relationship between leaders and members, a leader must build *credit* with a group. This *credit* is what gives them the subsequent legitimacy to exert influence over members. Such legitimacy can be gained from various sources, it can come through appointment, or election, or through the support of followers in a less formal way. The basis of a teamleader's legitimacy varies and his/her relationship to team-members may also vary according to the basis of this legitimacy. While the following have been defined

as management styles (Smith et al. 1984:176) they are nevertheless also helpful in defining the different roles of teamleaders and teamspeakers:

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- Teamleaders ***tell***: this is the most authoritarian style.
  - Teamleaders ***sell***: teamleaders still see themselves as the decision-maker and controller, but instead of simply issuing instructions they will consider the best way to present their wishes to the subordinate so as to get a reasonable and willing compliance.
  - Teamleaders ***test***: in this style teamleaders will still define the situation and possible course of action, and will then ask the subordinate(s) for comments and opinions.
  - Teamleaders ***consults***: here is the beginning of participation.
  - The teamleader ***joins***: this is a totally participative style. The teamleader and subordinate(s) jointly review the situation and reach a decision on appropriate action.
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A *teamleader tells* style would be most likely in the case of an appointed teamleader who can draw on management's given authority; a democratic teamspeaker is less likely to use the *teamleader tells* approach. A less authoritarian approach is the *teamleader sells* style, which seeks compliance with the teamleader still in control. An elected teamspeaker is less likely to use a *sell* or *test* style; consultation is the style of democratic teamspeakers, who need the team's backing and legitimacy. Appointed teamleaders on the other hand generally do not need to consult a team, because their basis of legitimacy is external and they do not need the backing of the team. The *teamleader joins* style describes a mode of democratic leadership; s/he is part of a team and her/his legitimacy is based on the team. For example teamleaders at Rover who are selected by a mixed system of appointment and election, are not free to move towards a style described as *telling* or *selling*, because they still depend on their team. Even though Rover's teamleaders are assessed by management, they depend on their teams, i.e. they tend to favour *consultation* or a *joint* leadership style.



## 2.1.2. Conclusions

Teams are clearly, then, not the same as groups and according to all the accepted criteria manufacturing teams are in fact groups. Unlike teams which share leadership responsibilities in a democratic style, groups often have a strong authoritarian leader. This thesis will argue that what is called teamwork in the motor-car industry by either sociological or IR criteria, does not represent genuine teamwork as defined by Katzenbach & Smith. Given the conventional use of the term *teamwork* by industry, the thesis will use the term *teamwork*, even though the term *workgroup* would be more appropriate. However, teams in manufacturing do have a certain autonomy from the organisation as investigations using Gulowsen's measure will demonstrate (chapter 7), but they also show that the level of autonomy is low. Indeed, only 1/3rd of all teams examined are able to select their teamleader and most teamleaders' legitimacy is derived from management. Given this basis to their legitimacy, research is able to demonstrate that the motor-car industry is dominated by a particular leadership style, which tends to be non-democratic. This has a number of implications for the way that new representational forms have emerged from the introduction of teamwork and also on how these new forms have affected traditional representational structures.

## 2.2. The Theory of Industrial Relations

The following section will examine the triadic approach to IR 1) *unitarism*, 2) *pluralism* and 3) *adversarial* by looking at each area in three ways: a) the orientation of actors, b) the pattern of relationships, c) a theoretical assessment (Fox 1974:248f.). This is followed by a consideration of the implications of *unitarism*, *pluralism*, and *adversarialism* for industrial democracy. The place of teamwork in industrial democracy and the implications for representation and participation are evaluated. Finally, the theory of democratic and non-democratic systems is examined in relation to its implications for 4) teamwork and industrial democracy, 5) Moore and Walton and McKersie.

Cressy (1985), Salaman (1987:25) and others follow Fox (1966) with some variations. The latter initially specified two frames of reference: a) the *unitary* ideology, b) the *pluralist* ideology, and then, through his critique of pluralism, added a further *radical* perspective, i.e. the *adversarial*. Since one of the shortcomings of the triadic approach is its restriction to three “boxes”, Purcell & Ahlstrand (1994) have developed a more refined version of the three approaches by developing sub-divisions. One of their sub-divisions of Fox’s *pluralism* is designated as *sophisticated consultative*, yet another is the concept of a *modern paternalism* in which management “recognises and values the relationship with trade unions and works council” (1994:197). Their analysis of a *sophisticated consultative* framework is built on the idea of a complex but constructive relationship with trade unions. In contrast to this, *pure* paternalism is essentially unitarist because it not only attempts to avoid unions it also provides its own system of benefits for employees and therefore expects loyalty in return. Another

sub-division of Fox's *unitarism* is *traditionalism*, which is opposed to workers' organisations of representation. Purcell & Ahlstrand use the term *bargained constitutional* as a sub-division of the adversarial system to illustrate how a long-established union representation can be permitted by management and yet operate in an adversarial relationship. Participation within the category *bargained constitutional*, is based on highly specific collective bargaining arrangements which are clearly marked and are controlled by management.

The triadic approach can provide a useful tool not only to understand and analyse actions in IR, but also to compare IR phenomena. By using the triadic approach, three levels of analysis are important to differentiate: A) IR actors can use one of these *frames of reference* as an ideology; this is the case when decisions and policies within an IR system are based on an ideology which creates the *frame of reference*. This can be seen as what Parsons (1968:758) calls "*action frame of reference*". Giddens (1979:55) uses the terms *action* or *agency* which consists of several factors: the active consciousness of the actor, a set of reasons, the motivational component of their actions and practice that are formed by intentions that influence human conduct, etc. Classic cases are the model *us and them* to describe an *adversarial* frame of reference; *we are all one big family* to describe the attitude that prevails in a *unitarist frame of reference*; and *everything is manageable* to describe a *pluralist* frame of reference. B) Giddens sees *structuration* as ways in which regular and repeated forms of action generate systems of expectations and normal modes of behaviour, in turn shaping actors' relations with each other. Then, for example, pluralist modes and actions can create pluralist structures. An action can build one element which together with other elements can determine pattern of behaviour that result in institutionalised

forms of IR. Structure can be “understood as referring to a pattern of social relationships” (Giddens 1979:60). This is the second level of the triadic approach. C) The triadic model can then also be fitted into a wider theoretical perspective which is then used to analyse IR. This is the intellectual perspective or a set of social beliefs or ideology. Unlike Parsons’ action frame of reference, these are intellectual perspectives based on social beliefs and not on action in a Parsonian sense. For example IR can be understood using theoretical perspectives like Marx’ theory of political economy or using Walton and McKersie’s theory of collective bargaining to examine the behaviour of parties in the process of negotiations.

As Purcell & Ahlstrand (1994) and others have shown, simply adapting the triadic approach involves the danger of possessing a model which has significant shortcomings. Within collective bargaining negotiations, Walton and McKersie (1965) argue that a feature of the pluralist approach expresses itself in *integrative bargaining*, while the characteristics of Fox’ adversarial approach are similar to their *distributive bargaining* model. A sub-division of Walton and McKersie’s *attitudinal structuring model* is *collusion* (Purcell 1981:57) which has certain similarities with Fox’ unitarist model. Their *integrative bargaining* model can be linked to Purcell’s concept of a *high-trust* relationship (1981:61), while their *distributive bargaining* model indicates Purcell’s *low-trust* model. However, despite the shortcomings of the triadic model, it is useful not only for an analysis of teamwork and representation, it can also help to set up a frame of reference to compare different IR systems. The following section will describe the triadic approach (2.2.1. to 2.2.3.) divided into three sub-sections as it applies to: a) IR, b) industrial democracy and c) teamwork. The sub-sections will in-

clude the use of *unitarism*, *pluralism*, and *adversarialism* as: a) a frame of reference, b) a pattern of relationships, and c) an intellectual and theoretical perspective.

2.2.1. to 2.2.3.	a) industrial relations	b) industrial democracy	c) teamwork
2.2.1. unitarist	- frame of reference - pattern of relationships - intellectual perspective	- frame of reference - pattern of relationships - intellectual perspective	- frame of reference - pattern of relationships - intellectual perspective
2.2.2. pluralist	- frame of reference - pattern of relationships - intellectual perspective	- frame of reference - pattern of relationships - intellectual perspective	- frame of reference - pattern of relationships - intellectual perspective
2.2.3. adversarial	- frame of reference - pattern of relationships - intellectual perspective	- frame of reference - pattern of relationships - intellectual perspective	- frame of reference - pattern of relationships - intellectual perspective

## 2.1.1. Unitarism

### Unitarist industrial relations as a frame of reference

The IR concept of a *unitarist* frame of reference (Fox 1974:249) uses the family as an analogy, i.e. the ideal unitarist vision compares IR to a family. It sees family as a synonym for relations in industry with the guiding paternal hand of management as the hierarchical head. As in a family, each actor in the industrial organisation has a given place with a set role in an accepted hierarchy; collective bargaining either has a diminished role or does not occur at all. Management and workers' representatives have an attitude towards co-operation, as in Walton and McKersie's attitudinal structuring model they *collude* to avoid collective bargaining. Both parties go beyond the question of recognising the legitimacy of the other's ends and means"; interests merge and both "form a coalition in which they pursue common ends" (Walton and McKersie 1965:188).

Just as in a family, the concept of loyalty is important in this model, so is the concept of mutual understanding and commitment in this model (Storey & Sisson 1991:168). This sort of loyalty can be expressed in manufacturing industry as an *esprit de corps*

or as the Japanese feudalist concept of *oyabun-kobun* or again as Fox's *Master and Servant* relationship (1974:250), i.e. a mutual dependency with a top-down structure. Each position within this framework is determined and actors have to play their role. As in a family, a *unitarist* frame of reference demands loyalty from each member and trust in leadership from the top. This model sees managers as strong father figures, invites all the IR actors to identify with the organisation and fulfil their role in his/her place in the hierarchy. A managerial *unitarist* frame of reference seeks a good paternalistic relationship with senior stewards and unions (if they exist at all), on the basis that "we're in the same business for the same purpose" (Rose 1992:265), i.e. it identifies management and worker's goals.

### Unitarist industrial relations as an approach

The *unitarist pattern of a relationship* is basically conflict free because it starts from the assumption that industrial organisations are characterised by shared interests and values. *Unitarism* as a pattern of a relationship assumes that there is a family or a team striving towards a common goal (Purcell & Sisson 1984). IR is therefore structured in a way which avoids conflict, because the main function of IR is to support the process of production. This is HRM's function. Marchington (1992:8) says of HRM: "At its most basic level, HRM has come into vogue as a new, more fashionable name for personnel management". However, Storey (1992) makes a distinction between personnel management, IR and HRM; he views the nature of this relation as *unitarist* (1992:35). In a unitarist approach industrial democracy is seen as the communicating of management's decisions; these briefings take on the status of employee involvement (Marchington & Armstrong 1981). Charismatic leadership appeals to a unity of interests and uses a hierarchical structure of established procedures for common agree-

ments. In its most logical and constant form it operates like a *determinist machine* (Cressey 1985:129).

### Unitarist industrial relations: an intellectual perspective

*Unitarism as an intellectual perspective* starts with the assumption that there is an identity of interests between capital and labour. It argues that an independent organisation of representation via stewards and unions is not needed, because workers' and management's interests are the same (Marchington & Armstrong 1981). *Unitarism as an intellectual perspective* does not investigate or even recognise power as central to social and industrial life. "It's existence is taken for granted and, hence, it's effects have been left largely uninvestigated" (Poole 1978:12).

*Unitarism as an intellectual perspective* views trade unions in three ways (Fox 1973:190); a) as *historical anachronisms* brought into existence originally by an unenlightened and short-sighted political movement to achieve so-called humane treatment by employers for employees; b) as a result of greed to increase the welfare of a particular group; c) more extremely it sees trade unions as a vehicle serving those who seek to subvert the existing social order, i.e. having a political purpose extraneous to the effective functioning of industry.

### Unitarist industrial democracy as a frame of reference

A *unitarist frame of reference* rejects any form of industrial democracy. Industrial democracy as a system of representation for different interest groups does not exist as a force within a unitarist frame of reference. It always seeks to perpetuate the idea of a conflict free zone where mutual understanding is achievable between management



and workers aiming for a common goal. Conflicts are not seen as inherent to the whole system, but as individual conflicts which need to be resolved on an individual level.

Marchington's concept of employee involvement (EI) can be seen as being part of a *unitarist frame of reference on industrial democracy*, because "EI differs from collective bargaining and industrial democracy, both of which are explicit forms of power sharing between management and employees - via their representatives" (Marchington 1992:18). Basically, *employee involvement* only operates on the level of granting employees more information, or in some cases a limited influence on the shopfloor. Again, to what extent autonomy is given, is at the discretion of management and therefore is non-democratic and essentially non-participatory.

### Unitarist industrial democracy as an approach

A *unitarist* approach to industrial democracy features HRM. For Ackers et al. HRM strategies includes participation as a model to by-pass unions. In their model of union by-passing, the "likely circumstances are an historically strong, workplace trade union organisation, facing a looser external labour market and unfavourable political advantage" (Ackers et al. 1992:277). Ackers et al. conclude that short of trying to destroy unions completely this HRM strategy is geared towards a domestication of unions. This is exactly what happened in the 1980s in some well-unionised larger manufacturing companies and led to a non-union model. This "is a *union avoidance model* championed by US companies like IBM and Hewlett Packard" (Ackers et al. 1992:277). They also quote examples where trade union organisation pose an obstacle to management's control of its human resource management techniques.

A *unitarist* approach to industrial democracy is demonstrated in Japanese IR in workplaces in Britain, such as Sony and Nissan, etc. The principle of a no-strike or lock-out agreement is achieved through the setting up of a "*participative*" mechanism - the company employees' board. Not industrial democracy, but employee involvement via consultation is introduced. This type of consultation involves no more than explaining the commercial objectives of the company. In contrast to a *pluralist* approach, which seeks to create institutions for participation, a *unitarist* approach to industrial democracy sees *individual* consultation as more important than group consultation, preferring to deal with workers as isolated units rather than with groups of workers. This does not constitute anything like real industrial democracy. In a *unitarist* approach, industrial democracy or participation is reduced to production-related issues like quality etc. and does not reach the realm of workers' involvement at any other level. Therefore, shopfloor workers participate exclusively, but directly in quality control circles and in group-oriented problem solving efforts but not in any other type of decision making.

A *unitarist* approach to industrial democracy as a conflict-solving mechanism defines industrial conflict in a narrow individualistic way; "the doctrine of common purpose and harmony of interests implies that an apparent conflict is either (a) merely frictional, e.g. due to incompatible personalities or things going wrong, or (b) caused by faulty communication, e.g. misunderstandings about aims or methods, or (c) the result of stupidity in the form of a failure to grasp the communality of interests, or (d) the work of agitators inciting the supine majority who would otherwise be content" (Fox 1966:12).

### Unitarist industrial democracy: an intellectual perspective

The intellectual tool to analyse industrial democracy in a *unitarist* IR system is not co-decision-making or participation, but a very weak version of participation; i.e. *employee involvement*. For the advocates of employee involvement (*unitarism*), "industrial democracy - as an aspect of practical IR - was buried with the Bullock Committee fifteen years ago; and *employee participation* is its replacement; "*employee involvement* is silent on power but noisy on getting work done more efficiently" (Towers 1992:1).

Unitarists have not developed an intellectual perspective on industrial democracy, because both are mutually exclusive. In short, from an intellectual view point, democracy can exist in the area of politics, but not as an aspect of IR.

### Unitarist teamwork as a frame of reference

Given the *unitarist* frame of reference a team is seen as a family within a larger family, the company, with a teamleader as a father figure. A teamleader in this system does not belong to either side of a social or industrial organisation and there is no need for any kind of election process to balance an inherent conflict between different power interests, because:

there are no opposing groups or factions, and therefore no rival leaders within the team. Its members owe allegiance to their own leader but to no others. If the members have an obligation of loyalty towards the leader, the obligation is certainly reciprocated, for it is the duty of the leader to act in such a way as to inspire the loyalty he demands. Morale and success are closely connected and rest heavily upon personal relationships (Fox 1966:3).

Given that a hierarchical concept of loyalty is the central frame of reference, teams are expected to be loyal to the company and team-members are expected to be loyal to their teamleaders.

### Unitarist teamwork as an approach

The *unitarist* team-concept approach focuses on authority and on loyalty. Teams are not regarded as independent units in a plant which are allowed to act on their own behalf. Nor are they seen as an independent force representing one interest among other interest groups. Teams are seen as part of an organic structure functioning as a natural part of the company to enhance the goals of management. Direct and individual involvement in production related issues on the shopfloor is often carried out in production teams, i.e. involvement on the lowest level as part of HRM strategies.

As much as teams are encouraged to involve themselves directly on the shopfloor, they are not believed to need any participative role in the selection of a teamleader; this is defined as part of the *right to manage*. This view can be located in a strong authoritarian practice. In the *unitarist* team-concept, "teamleaders have the opportunity to become more involved" (Kinnie 1989:142), while in Kinnie's definition the teamleader is part of the involvement process, the team itself is not.

### Unitarist teamwork: an intellectual perspective

Teams are organised in a so-called *natural way* and management selects teamleaders in the interest of teams. Teams are part of a hierarchical system at the bottom of the organisation, serving production and are themselves hierarchical; the teamleader be-

comes, in turn, a father figure imposing his will on the team and regards himself as the trustee of their true interests (cf. Endo 1994). The intellectual perspective of *unitarism*, as far as teamwork is concerned, can be summarised in the words of a Nissan manager Mithunaga (1992) at the Kyushu plant:

Our team system is organised like the Yakuza (cf. Japanese mafia) in a top-down way so that the top can control the bottom, the head can control the hand.

In sharp contrast to the *adversarial or pluralistic* view of teamwork, *unitarism* does not view teams as an additional group with rights to participate, nor as an additional actor representing either side: management or workers.

## 2.2.2. Pluralism

### Pluralist industrial relations as a frame of reference

Walton and McKersie's (1965:5) *integrative bargaining* model shares some of the characteristics of the *pluralist* framework; i.e. both sides negotiate in a joint decision-making process, which "requires open communication which in turn depends on trust" (Purcell 1981:51). Therefore a positive attitude towards trust plays a central role in *integrative bargaining*. In the words of Walton and McKersie (1965:356): "problem solving succeeds with frankness" between the two groups. The *pluralist* frame of reference or the *pluralist* standpoint (Fox 1974:258) argues that different groups have different interests and that institutions are needed to bring about the accommodation of these different interests. Management and workers do not all *sit in one boat*. This difference of interest is recognised as part of the *pluralist* frame of reference; it is not ignored or denied.

The essential aspect of this frame of reference is that the actors believe that conflicts between management and workers are inherent to the system and that they can be regulated on a micro level. There is also a strong belief in institutions and their capacity to *manage* IR problems.

### Pluralist industrial relations as an approach

The *pluralist approach* to IR recognises permanent conflict as part of the industrial system (Clegg 1975:312); it focuses on *procedures* which Fox (1974:264) calls: *basic procedural consensus*. As a pattern of behaviour for conflict-solving, Walton and McKersie (1965:4) focus on the use of *integrative bargaining* to find common interests and solve the problems confronting both parties. Both methods have the underlying assumption that joint-decision-making processes are necessary (1965:5). Consequently, "industrial relations *pluralists* have generally combined a sense of the inevitability of conflict in industrial life, with a balanced awareness of the grounds for co-operation and compromise" (Ackers et al. 1992:269). The *pluralist approach* allows the existence of independent trade unions, but sees them as part of an institutional framework and needing to operate within a defined framework. Industrial democracy, then, is an instrument to forge corporatism.

In Cressey's words (1985:117): "the *participation approach* is oriented towards improving industrial relations practices, changing workforce attitudes and possibly significantly reordering the authority relations between the workforce and their managers and supervisors". Essential for the *pluralist* approach is the existence of industrial democracy and participation within institutionalised forms of IR.

### Pluralist industrial relations: an intellectual perspective

Pluralism as a political concept was one of the main philosophical outcomes of the *Age of Enlightenment* which assumed that *justice* could be established through intellectual competition (Quesel 1992:227). Pluralism as an intellectual perspective primarily “emerged as a criticism of the political doctrine of sovereignty” (Clegg 1975:309), i.e. it accepted the existence of two forces and the need to find a model for compromise. It can be translated into industrial relations, because there are similarities between the process of collective bargaining in IR and the political processes of compromise and concession (Clegg 1975:311) in other systems.

Ackers et al. (1992) argue that the ideal *philosophical participation* is located within the *pluralist approach*. Indeed, its original source is primarily ideological or philosophical whether on the part of the state, a political party or an employer. Essential to pluralism is the idea of distribution of power. Power “must be distributed in some acceptable fashion among individuals, organised groups and the state” (Kerr 1955:3). Contemporary examples of this are the German works council system, the Bullock proposals and, the European Union (EU) social charter all of which embody participatory ideals whose explicit aims are harmonisation.

### Pluralist industrial democracy as a frame of reference

Unlike *adversarialism* and *unitarism*, the *pluralist frame of reference* in industrial democracy is based on the concept of groups negotiating with each other (Fox 1973:192). Actors within a pluralist frame of reference, then, see themselves as one group in a group-based system inside the company. Actors view the accommodation

of different interests as an attempt to reach some state of parity; i.e. actors believe that a balance of power is possible between competing interest groups and that this is oriented towards improving industrial relations practices (Cressey 1985:117). There is an assumption among IR actors about the existence of different interests and that this can be negotiated within an agreed common framework of industrial democracy, i.e. an institutionalised form of *interest management*. Unlike a *unitarist* frame of reference which puts emphasis on the guiding hand of management to serve workers' interests, actors within the pluralist frame of reference assume that both sides can work together. Unlike an *adversarial* or a *unitarist* frame of reference, the *pluralist* frame of reference draws strongly on democratic ideals.

### Pluralist industrial democracy as an approach

*Pluralism* particularly emphasises participation and *integrative bargaining* within established institutions; participation through collective bargaining, then, is part of the pluralist approach (Mason 1982:188). In the context of German IR, for example, the *pluralist approach* locates *distributive bargaining* via independent unions outside the arena of workplace collective bargaining to keep strikes, etc. away from company based industrial democracy. While inside the workplace, the German normative-pluralist system has created a forum for *integrative bargaining* via works council and joint-negotiation committees. In short, the German system has divided *integrative* from *distributive bargaining* by allocating *integrative bargaining* to the company level and *distributive bargaining* to the regional and sectorial level (chapter 5.2.2.).

The *pluralist* approach to industrial democracy recognises problem-solving as a set of *structural arrangements* or *institutionalised procedures* to solve conflicts between



different groups within the company (Purcell & Sisson 1984:113). A *pluralist* approach to IR needs such institutionalised forms for problem-solving, while micro-level conflicts are inevitable but they are not unsolvable. Problems become negotiable once they are transferred to the proper institution. They are resolved through "structural arrangements which link organisational decisions to the interests of employees and employers" (Marchington 1992:23).

### Pluralist industrial democracy: an intellectual perspective

Most pluralists accept the basic premise that management should manage, but also stress the value of participation (cf. Blumberg 1968:131) through institutionalised forms to contain management's power to manage. This is the essence of an intellectual perspective of a *pluralist* system. A *pluralist* perspective on industrial democracy "is based on the belief that it anticipates the creation of a new more democratic, and more egalitarian society" (Greenberg 1986:14). In contrast to the *loyalty* theme, the *pluralist approach* views industrial democracy as an instrument which can influence industrial societies, i.e. through the collaboration and co-operation of workers and employers the quality of workers' lives can be improved and the goals of employers (i.e. profits) can be simultaneously achieved.

Clegg emphasises that interaction between political and industrial democracy, i.e. just as the political democracy needs a system of opposition so there is case for a "strong and independent oppositional body to management within industry (i.e. the trade unions)" (Poole 1978:31). One problem that can arise from *pluralist* views on industrial democracy is that workers learn to take their right to political suffrage for granted but because of the real nature of power relations within capitalism they are prevented

from participating in a full and democratic way and therefore become frustrated (Coates & Topham 1972:217); i.e. any assumption that is based on an asymmetric distribution of power is an illusion (Purcell 1979:27) and therefore pluralism can seem to offer democracy and participation without the equal distribution of power which makes the former possible.

### Pluralist teamwork as a frame of reference

In terms of *pluralism*, industrial democracy and teamwork belong in the democratic frame of reference. The internal structure of the team is organised along democratic lines and team-members are given the opportunity to influence teamwork and can be elected as teamspeaker. In a democratic IR system, the democratic ethos is transferred into teams not only because the teamspeaker is elected, but because of the degree of participation by the team in internal team affairs. In addition, such teams should not be restricted to issues solely related to production but their remit should be wider in the sense that they can negotiate with management and resolve IR issues.

A *pluralist* frame of reference sees the importance of democratic institutions for the system to be successful. Institutions act as a mode of mediation and negotiation in order to smooth the path for changes ranging from workers mobility, setting up new production lines, locating of production processes, etc. When faced with IR issues like that of the introduction of teamwork, the *pluralist* frame of reference creates institutions for monitoring the transition. Thus a *pluralist* frame of reference tends to result in a more democratic version of teamwork, because it also uses a democratic method of implementation.

### Pluralist teamwork as an approach

Teamwork is not contradictory to a *pluralist* approach to IR. Given the levels of participation in such a system, teams provide an additional level of representation. Poole's (1978) *pluralist* approach demonstrates that teams are restricted to the shop-floor which sets boundaries to their participation. However, this can have positive advantages; Goodrich (1920:119) sees the regulative power of a team as an essential factor for industrial democracy, because it models democratic forms of participation on the shopfloor and demonstrates the value of democracy. Although teams might be democratic in style and structure, however their ability to influence decisions of any importance is limited.

For the *pluralist* approach to work, the creation of teamspeakers is again accepted as in the interest of both workers and management. They are seen as actors who can provide direct input on IR on the shopfloor and at managerial level to solve problems before they reach the stage of conflict and the usual forms of traditional representation, i.e. workplace representatives, works councils, and shop stewards. In such a system, teamspeakers are not seen as a system of representation that competes with the traditional structure of representation but one that supplements it to create greater democracy throughout the system. Teamwork provides an option for the type of negotiations described by Walton and McKersie's *integrative bargaining*, because this type of bargaining refers to the rights and obligations of both sides and not merely to strictly economic situations (*distributive bargaining*).

## Pluralist teamwork: an intellectual perspective

For theorists of democracy, teamwork provides one organisational form of democracy in which decisions can be reached by open discussion and voting. Lippitt and White (1960) in a classic study of leadership argue that *democratic* leadership is essential to pluralism. Sociologists who study groups and political scientists focus on the value of teamwork as a pluralist form which can bring about a democratic resolution to work organisation and IR conflicts (Trist 1981). While sociologists of democratic theory tend to focus on internal team structures, political scientists focus more on the selection process of leaders.

Schumpeter (1976) represents, a pragmatic pluralist view when he argues that democracy is less a political goal than an *institutional arrangement*, i.e. a pragmatic method of mediation between the two classes, workers and management and acts as a form of convenient arrangement between the two. Schumpeter therefore supports the concept of elected leadership on the basis that democracy is a type of market place which offers constructive solutions. For Schumpeter, it is the competitive struggle for leadership that is the distinctive feature of democracy's value for IR (cf. Pateman 1970:4). In other words, teamwork can be seen as a form of democracy, because with teamwork, workers can compete for leadership within their teams, i.e. the position of team-speaker. Even if teams have no other function besides the election of team-speakers, this is still a vberly important form of democracy.

## 2.2.3. Adversarialism

### Adversarial industrial relations as a frame of reference

An *adversarial frame* of reference can be described as fundamentally advocating a dualist approach with workers on the one side and management on the other. IR is seen as the meeting point of two classes: labour and capital. Actors of IR within this frame of reference see the two sides as *us and them*, workers and management. Class conflict is seen as inherent and inevitable and both sides operate with an attitude of *low-trust* and *high militancy* (Walton and McKersie 1965:122).

This is an overtly conflictual model of distrust with both sides operating defensively because “they do not trust each other” (Purcell 1981:50). There is also a “desire to preserve an arm’s length relationship (Walton and McKersie 1965:18) because of this basic distrust in the other side. Both camps envision themselves in a state of trench warfare and therefore actors within this frame of reference see the IR system as *adversarial*. For management and workers who operate within this *adversarial* model distrust and hostility towards the other side is endemic. An *us and them* frame of reference often means the exclusion of unions and their representatives from participation; for workers’ representatives this means the constant need to protect their own interests. Management continuously seeks to increase the rate of exploitation and therefore their control while workers' organisations owe their existence to the need to oppose management and employers desire to exclude them (Blumberg 1968:40).

### Adversarial industrial relations as an approach

The permanent conflict of interests between capital and labour thus pervades all aspects of this employment relationship. Management constantly attempts to increase the rate of exploitation; workers constantly defend their conditions (Burawoy 1979). The very nature of the capitalist economy may drive management to increase the rate of workers exploitation in the search for profit and result in an attempt to diminish the power of the other side. Within such a model no accommodation between employees and employers is possible, because “the interests of the two parties are diametrically opposed” (Walton and McKersie 1965:127).

Such *adversarial* patterns are described by Walton and McKersie’s (1965:11) *distributive bargaining*; i.e.conflict on interest between management and unions occurs in situations in which one party wins what the other party loses. In such a *win-lose* situation, the *adversarial* approach to IR is not based on participation and discussion, but on the fear of incorporation and non-participation. For workers, then, any participation within this framework is seen as a betrayal of their interests. Essential to this *adversarial* approach is the existence of independent workers’ organisations, because they alone are seen to be able to defend workers against management’s interests.

### Adversarial industrial relations as an intellectual perspective

The *labour process* approach has its intellectual and philosophical base in Marx’ *Critique on Political Economy*. *Labour process* theory essentially states that capital owns the means of production and hires labour to produce the goods it wishes to sell at a profit. “The labour process has developed three basic structural features: a) the division of intellectual and manual labour, b) hierarchical control, c) fragmentation or

deskilling of labour" (Brighton Labour Process Group 1977:16). Central to the *adversarial* intellectual approach to IR is the issue of power and control i.e. who controls teams for example becomes pivotal in the introduction of teamwork. Control in industrial relations (Purcell 1977) can take different forms (R. Edwards 1979): a) *simple control* by an authoritarian boss, b) *technological control* (control through Fordist and Taylorist manufacturing techniques), c) *bureaucratic control* as analysed by Max Weber, and d) *concertive control* (Barker 1993:409; cf. Garrahan & Stewart 1992; Sewell & Wilkinson 1992; Stephenson 1994; McKinlay & Taylor 1994). In summary, teams are not a democratic attempt to distribute power, but rather they are a mechanism of control in the hands of management.

### Adversarial industrial democracy as a frame of reference

Given the *adversarial frame* of reference, i.e. *us and them*, IR actors tend not to participate in industrial democracy and to see it partly as a *fraud* or a manipulative *game* to weaken the other side. Employees argue that management controls information or deliberately miscommunicates in order to mislead workers' representatives. There is a substantial lack of trust (Walton and McKersie 1965:142) on both sides. From this perspective workers view industrial democracy as an illusion and little more than an attempt to incorporate their representatives into management's agenda (Purcell 1981:235) and therefore they often refusing a participatory approach.

Since workers fear incorporation into a management agenda, the *adversarial frame* of reference can also be described as *anti-incorporatist*. Management on the other hand, see workers' democracy as a threat to their status quo and as a strategy of usurping their power and control. The basic philosophical frame of reference can be seen as:

external capitalist forces determine both management's need for control and workers' resistance to the capitalist mode of production (Friedman 1977:56).

### Adversarial industrial democracy as an approach

Ramsay (1977) argues this adversarial position when he states that industrial democracy and participation are merely instruments to secure labour's compliance to management and that this can be accomplished in several different ways. In Ramsay's *success* category, participative forms are established and are successful but this very success lead to an acceptance of the status quo and this is used by the system against workers' interests. The second category is *triviality* under which participation is reduced to a very minor participative role, i.e. *tea towel issues*. In the third category he argues that participation leads to *instability*. It is because workers understand that participation is a management technique to gain compliance that they reject industrial democracy. On the other hand management prefers a unitary frame of reference refusing "de facto recognition of unions and bargaining" (Ramsay 1977:482) in order to maintain stability. Ramsay calls this last category *committee status*; real conflicts are shelved by moving them to institutionalised form such as committees. In the adversarial model institutions are not seen as accommodating workers' interests but as a means of management control. In summary, management's interest in participation and industrial democracy is viewed as a lip-service to the democratic ideal with the ultimate aim of *incorporating* workers into management's strategies.

The *adversarial* or anti-incorporative approach is summarised by Blumberg (1968:142): "If the trade unions were to participate in management, they would inevitably be drawn into an organisational role conflict, with workers as the ultimate los-



ers". For managers too participative forms can be seen as problematic with workers attempting to usurp management powers without an appropriate understanding of the economic situation or market forces. For both workers and management participation in industrial democracy is a contradiction to the idea of *distributive bargaining*, because *distributive bargaining* assumes a conflict of interest and is in its very nature a self-interested process" (Walton and McKersie 1965:357), i.e. management wants to follow their own interests in the same way as unions do. Participation, according to this model, can only be designed to make workers believe that relationships of power have been resolved (Eberwein et al. 1982:232) resulting in an illusion of power sharing and common interest.

### Adversarial industrial democracy: an intellectual perspective

In terms of the *adversarial* analysis democracy is impossible in the world of industry which is an arena in which two economic classes battle. Indeed unlike political democracy, "most industrial and commercial management is selected in a very different manner from democratic governments" (Clegg 1975:311), i.e. no management is elected by workers. Although Clegg can be seen as a pluralist, his critique on industrial democracy focuses on the core element of democracy in industry. In order to label an institution democratic certain characteristics must be present, all the participants must have equal rights to candidacy for positions of power, to choosing their officers, and to having a say in major decisions and policies via their representatives (Lammers 1992:586). This is not the case in management-union relationships. Therefore Lammers argues, the concept of industrial democracy is a contradiction in itself; industry is, by definition, a place where one side governs and controls the other; any form of democratic election is controlled and manipulated in the interests of the most power-

ful group. The adversarial position believes that "the organisation and objectives of capitalist industry are structured against the realisation of workers' interests" (Hyman 1975a:XXIV).

### Adversarial teamwork as a frame of reference

Given the *us and them* nature of IR within this frame of reference teamwork in an *adversarial* system is seen primarily as management's teamwork. Teamwork can either serve the interests of the workers or the interests of management but is most likely to serve the latter given the power relationship between the two. Therefore given the frame of reference based on non-participation, workers' representatives tend neither to want to introduce teamwork, nor to select teamleaders as the team itself is seen as an instrument of management control. In the manufacturing industry therefore it is management who introduces teamwork for their own purpose, i.e. the greater exploitation of labour and therefore influences the way it is set up in their own interests.

The introduction of teamleaders by management, however, can create a dilemma for workers' representatives. Actors with an *adversarial frame* of reference see themselves in a way that does not allow them to participate in the selection of teamleaders, and they have an attitude of exclusion towards teamleaders, because they see teamleaders as agents of management. As teamleaders have a representative function, which overlaps the representative functions of worker's representatives, it is impossible for workers to ignore these new IR players. Actors with an *adversarial frame* of reference demand an independent trade union body to represent workers, teamleaders are excluded from the selection because teamwork is seen as a management strategy for control.

### Adversarial teamwork as an approach

Workers' representatives, in an *adversarial* IR system, tend to either try to avoid the introduction of teamwork or try to minimise the damage caused by teamwork. Given the prime objective of workers to create independent workers organisations, teamwork is seen as a tool in the hands of management which can damage worker's representation by setting up independent channels and undermining the traditional representatives forms set up by workers themselves.

Such a system gives workers the illusion of having an additional level of representation. Ironically, in an *adversarial* system, trade unions will argue for *appointed* teamleaders to avoid confusion over the issue of representation among workers, i.e. they are agents of management and this must be clearly seen to be the case. The power of the teamleader must be diminished in order not to challenge the workers' own system of representation. On the other hand, management is also determined to appoint teamleaders to ensure that *their* own teamleaders are in control and are prepared to augment management's power.

### Adversarial teamwork: an intellectual perspective

A Marxist class conflict model informs the dynamics of the *adversarial* model; capital against labour, management against worker. Actors within this framework are set against each other, locked in a continuous battle to maintain power and control. For management this control extends to every area of the work arena so teamwork can have the advantage for them of greater control by-passing traditional worker power and using methods to create an illusion of democracy. For workers teamwork within

this *adversarial* frame, is a further device of management to erode their conditions and to remove their power from their organisation.

Nevertheless management accepts the idea of teamwork if it can be used to seek greater compliance from workers (Ramsey 1977) but for the workers within this framework it is always imposed from above (Parker & Slaughter 1988). There is also sufficient evidence to demonstrate that while workers co-operate initially to set up teamwork in the hope of greater participation, they are soon disillusioned (Babson 1993, Stephenson 1994) and see it as a device to get more work from them (Robertson 1992).

## 2.2.4. Teamwork & Industrial Democracy

The introduction of teamwork in the European motor-car industry, then, did not take place in a vacuum, it happened within a particular IR system with particular ideologies and attitudes to industrial democracy. It was in the context of a particular IR framework, (*unitarism, pluralism, adversarialism*) that teamwork developed. A prime example of how these positions influenced teamwork is apparent in examining the issue of teamleaders. When teamwork was introduced into the motor-car industry the team was usually *headed* by a teamleader/teamspeaker who took the position for a period of at least 6 months; Volvo's rotating teamspeakers at its Uddevalla plant are exceptions to this rule; until the closure of Uddevalla in the late 1980s, they were the only teamspeakers in the motor-car industry that rotated. The present-day motor-car industry has introduced teamwork overall, including teamleaders; the question of the selec-

tion process for teamleaders remains important; as a "method of selecting decision makers" (Mason 1982:46). In general, management, unions and works councils are faced with two choices when introducing a teamleader: a) election by the team-members or b) the appointment of the teamleader by management. In the case of a) and even more in the case of b), various kinds of assessments, test, screening or interviews for the teamleader may be applied to recruit a capable person for the position; "on the basis of suitability and qualifications for the position" (Jaguar 1991). In contrast to elections, the *appointment and assessment* model gives management total control over the appointment of teamleaders. Management expects certain functions from teamleaders, and therefore, demands an assessment. The *appointment and assessment* model is the classic model for all Japanese plants both outside and inside Japan. Within the *pure* appointment model, management does not see the need for an assessment.

A typical version of using a pure appointment method is Ford (FRG and UK) and Vauxhall (UK), where former *utility-leaders* or *charge-hands* are appointed as teamleaders. Such utility leaders have had previous experience in leading a group (not a team) of workers. The *pure* appointment model may indicate that management does not expect teamleaders to perform a different function from their previous work, i.e. they are merely renamed. However, the latter case is less likely because in most cases in the pure appointment model, management is able to draw on experienced *charge-hands* whose loyalty has already been tested within the system, i.e. they are promoted or appointed from those whose attitudes and style suit management. Management prefers, then, an appointment system with the need to assess the skills of teamleaders, i.e. a skill gap model issued because it gives them complete control. However, if the

teamspeaker is elected management seeks to demote their value, i.e. they have no assessed skills.

The method of selection reflects on management's attitude towards teamwork, its status, value and role. In an election model, based on the high skill level of most team-members, tasks can rotate within a team. Functional expectations of management towards teamspeakers however are consequently low, because a team can cover all the necessary functions and does not need to have a strong teamleader to operate. With the appointment model management expects elected teamspeakers to perform like *leaders* and to have different functions. Management does not assume that all team-members have the necessary skills to perform a leader's function, therefore, management argues the need for individual assessment. It thus argues for a skills gap model which does not expect to find *teamleader-skills* among team-members. With simple appointment system, management views the skills of *charge-hands* as somewhat similar to teamleaders' skills, therefore former *charge-hands* can be appointed to teamleaders.

This leads to the question of why companies have introduced different models, and why there are elections (GM West-Germany) and appointments (Vauxhall and GM-Eisenach), i.e. different systems within the same company (General Motors Europe). Common to all GM plants was the transition from a *worker-supervisor* to a *team-leader-team* system in the early 1990s. Although the time period and content of the transition was the same, the outcomes have, in fact, been very different. Sometimes a model has emerged leading towards democratic elections; at others an authoritarian

appointment system has been implemented. It is the other factors in the IR system that have influenced there divergent models that are of interest to this thesis.

## 2.2.5. Application: Walton & McKersie and Moore

In order to apply Walton and McKersie's and Moore's theory to IR and to the central question of teamwork, the following section will a) describe Walton and McKersie's theory of collective bargaining and Moore's theory of transition, b) examine a democratic and a non-democratic outcome of collective bargaining, c) apply their theories to teamwork, d) apply Walton and McKersie's model of collective bargaining and categories of transition to the triadic approach, e) apply these to IR, and f) analyse teamwork by using the theory of democratic and non-democratic outcomes and the theory of bargaining behaviour.

### a) Walton and McKersie: collective bargaining Moore: transition

Walton and McKersie (1965) have developed four theoretical models to analyse pattern of behaviour in a situation of collective bargaining. The most common form of collective bargaining takes place in their a) *distributive bargaining* model, which involves strictly economic values. In their new book *Strategic Negotiations* (Walton et al. 1994:44) this is called: "dividing the pie". While b) *integrative bargaining* issues are more likely to contain "items referring to rights and obligations" for which they use the term "expanding the pie" (1994:45). c) Their *attitudinal structuring model* is social-psychological in orientation (1965:184) and can be summarised in the following attitudinal dimensions: *adversarial*, i.e. conflict and the containment of aggression;

*pluralist*, i.e. accommodation and cooperation, and *unitarist*, i.e. collusion. Their fourth model d) is directed towards *interorganisational bargaining* and analyses the internal dynamics of the organisations behind negotiators in collective bargaining situations, i.e. management and union organisation.

Moore has developed a theory which describes the transition from one societal system (feudalism) to another system (modernity). Unlike the USA which he argues is the *first new nation* (Lipset 1964) without feudalism, his examples are of societies where systems went through a transition; not a *transformation*, in the sense that Habermas (1992) defines it, because for Habermas the transformation towards modernity is still incomplete. Such transitions can have a non-democratic (*adversarial* and *unitarist*) or a democratic outcome (*pluralist*).

### b) Teamwork, Transition and Collective Bargaining

Like the societal transitions described by Moore, in the realm of IR a transition can take place from an old system (*worker-supervisor* system) to a new system (teamwork). This in fact occurred in the car industry in the early 1990s. If it is the preceding structure that largely determines the outcome of such a transition, the pre-transitional existence of a certain IR system may well have defined the mode of selection for teamspeakers/teamleaders and the nature of the teams itself.

The transition from a worker-supervisor system to a teamwork system takes place with negotiations between management and unions/works councils. Such negotiations can take place either through *integrative* or *distributive bargaining*, (Walton and McKersie). Whether *integrative bargaining* or *distributive bargaining* determine the



outcome of negotiations, but again will be another factor in influencing collective bargaining outcomes.

### c) Categories of Transition and Collective Bargaining

The theory of transitions can provide an analytical framework not only to forecast different outcomes, but also to examine possible paths which lead to such outcomes. The theory is essentially concerned with the non-democratic and the democratic outcome of a transitional period. The democratic outcome occurs when neither side wins and the transition involves a compromise without authoritarianism. In this version, neither side is strong enough to win and the outcome is an arrangement between the two classes. Such a mediation or such an arrangement between two classes is commonly described as democratic. Moore again examines the routes to a) a democratic outcome: a successful revolution (French Revolution, the English Puritan Revolution and the American Civil War); and b) to a non-democratic outcome: I) a non-revolutionary outcome (fascism in Italy and Germany) or II) a revolutionary outcome (communism in Russia and China).

Walton and McKersie's model on the other hand is developed from the study of American collective bargaining negotiations and their pattern of behaviour. They use four systems of activities, each with its own function for the interacting parties. As in the case of the transitional model, Walton and McKersie's model is based on the understanding of two sides, i.e. management and unions. Their position to each other in a collective bargaining situation determines whether negotiations take place in an *integrative* or in a *distributive* model and the nature of the style chosen will itself influence outcomes.

#### d) The Industrial Relations Context

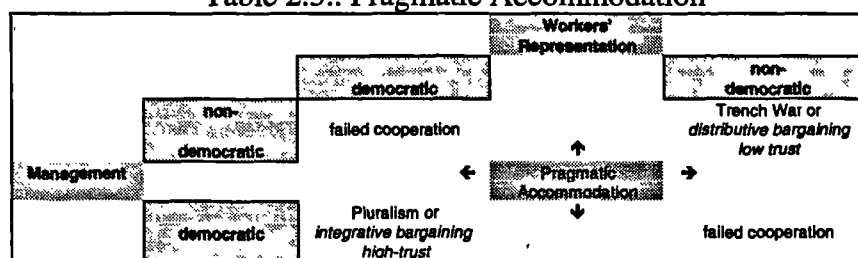
While it is obviously impossible to transfer Moore's analysis of the historical development of nation-states wholesale to the study of IR, there are nevertheless striking parallels with the IR theories discussed above. His theory of transitions has useful implications for a study of industrial democracy and IR and is largely based on the study of two classes. The present thesis can similarly be seen as the interaction of a study of the two classes within IR, i.e. workers' representatives and management, teamleaders/teamspeakers. Moore can be applied because management and organised labour do constitute two classes whose interaction within the world of industry creates transitional forms through the conflict of interests of both sides. As in the model for a non-democratic society, one side wins over the other side. Any imbalance of power as in Walton and McKersie's analysis of *distributive bargaining* can create a non-pluralist outcome, because one side wins. Only when neither workers nor management win and both negotiate towards a common or complementary interest (Walton and McKersie 1965:4), can a democratic balance of power (pluralism or *integrative bargaining*) be established and both sides "accept the rules of the game" (Purcell 1981:57).

For Walton and McKersie and for Purcell (1981), the concept of *trust* is an important factor in labour negotiations. Walton and McKersie (1965:122) write that *distributive bargaining* is "characterised by low trust and high militancy". For Purcell (1981:53) such a bargaining relationship is defined by a "distrustful relationship in industrial relations with the parties essentially denying each other's legitimacy". By contrast, *inte-*

*grative bargaining* trust is linked to a supportive climate. This is “marked by encouragement and freedom to behave spontaneously without fear of sanctions” Walton and McKersie’s (1965:141).

While Moore’s transition theory and Walton and McKersie’s bargaining theory function well to assist them to describe transitions and bargaining behaviour, no system ever conforms entirely to these categories. Certainly within IR the models overlap and often share elements of both non-democratic and democratic models and of *integrative bargaining* and *distributive bargaining* (Walton and McKersie 1965:161). In fact within IR the situation is never static, and the modes change constantly depending on the balance of shifting power relationships while always tends to move towards some sort of pragmatic accommodation:

Table 2.3.: Pragmatic Accommodation



#### e) Democratic and Non-Democratic Teamwork

Given a pre-transitional IR structure, three outcomes that affect teamwork can be detected: a) One outcome of a transition towards a *team-teamleader* system is non-democratic *authoritarianism*; management holds the power and colludes with the union (if there is one) and there is no election of teamspeakers (unitarist). d) The outcome of a high-trust and *integrative bargaining* relationship in negotiations for the selection of teamleaders/teamspeakers is *democracy*, teamspeakers are elected (*pluralist*). c) A third and non-democratic outcome occurs in an *adversarial* relation-

ship with an *distributive bargaining* system. This does not leave room for the election of teamspeakers, because such a relationship is based on low-trust.

Where a democratic outcome has occurred the teamspeaker is elected in fair and democratic elections without management's intervention. It seems that an IR system showing patterns of industrial democracy (Turner & Auer 1994:55-56) before the transition, are likely to introduce elections for teamspeakers. In other words, the existence of previous institutional arrangements is crucial. "Institutions of codetermination facilitate proactive union strategies which result in negotiated work reorganisation" (Turner & Auer 1994:56). In a democratic framework, the two social classes are seen as, an enlightened and modern management on the one hand, and a strong union organisation on the other. Both sides agree that the conflict over selection can be resolved in negotiations as a subject to compromise (Walton and McKersie 1965:133). Management does not see organised labour as a threat, but employers and wage earners recognise each other "as interacting agents of the enterprise" (Fürstenberg 1992:787) thus creating a *social partnership*. In the non-democratic outcome a) management dictates who the teamleader is (unitarism) or b) the *adversarial* model operates and management still appoints teamleaders.

As a result of the application of Fox' triadic model, Walton and McKersie's collective bargaining theory and Moore's theory of transition the following hypotheses can be formed: a) Whether or not a teamleader is elected or appointed, a teamleader will be a new player within industrial democracy on the shopfloor. b) Whether or not a teamleader is appointed or elected, as a team and working area representative, s/he may get into conflict with an elected steward and/or an elected works council on the issue

of: who represents? c) A teamspeakers who is elected is more likely to solely represent a team, because a teamleader can be voted out. A teamleader who is appointed by the company, represents the team's interest and the company's interest at the same time. d) If an elected teamspeaker represents a team, a teamleader may be a representative against the company in the case of a conflict. On the other hand, if a teamleader is appointed by the company, s/he may be used against the workers in the case of conflict. e) If a teamleader is appointed, a new form of workers control on the shop-floor may result. f) Whether or not a teamleader is appointed or elected, the area of conflict may shift more towards the shopfloor level.

## 2.2.6. Conclusions

It is possible then to draw on the general triadic models of Fox, Walton and McKersie and Moore to establish a framework of concepts to describe the transition from one form of IR on the shopfloor to another. Applied to the issue of teamwork on the shopfloor and the election or appointment of teamleaders, what is revealed is that, the forms such changes take are dependent on pre-transitional IR (*unitarism, pluralism, adversarial*). Such forms are: a) democracy (*pluralism or integrative bargaining*); in this case the drive for accommodation leads to a greater tendency to compromise on the nature of the team's role and there are elected teamspeakers, b) non-democracy (*unitarist and collusion or adversarial and distributive bargaining*), which leads to the acceptance of teamwork on management terms, by patterns of *obedience* (unitarist) or teamwork is imposed from above against workers' representatives (adversarial). If these three theoretical concepts are linked, an analytical tool can be

developed to examine the effects of teamwork on the structure of representation. If all three approaches are shown in a matrix, then the following can be stated:

Table 2.4.: Three theoretical Approaches

<b>Fox, etc</b>	<b>Walton &amp; McKersie</b>	<b>Transltion</b>
<b>Unitarism</b>	Collusion in Attitudinal Structuring	non-democratic
<b>Pluralism</b>	Integrative Bargaining	democracy
<b>Adversarial</b>	Distributive Bargaining	non-democratic

## 2.3. Conclusions

Teams can create a new system of representation within a plant and can potentially be actively involved in decision-making on the shopfloor. Teamleaders therefore represent a new player in IR and this raises issues for the traditional system of representation. Industrial relations writers have identified three models to analyse IR, which can be used to analyse the outcome from a traditional *worker-supervisor* system to a *team-teamleader* system.

The triadic approach needs however to be supported by more sophisticated levels to deal with the problem. The triadic model already explain not only the framework within which IR actors proceed (*unitarism*, *pluralism*, *adversarialism*), they help to analyse the institutional patterns that dominate particular IR situations. They also establish the intellectual assumptions from which systems develop. By analysing each one of these approaches, not only does their underlying structure come to light, but also their ideological location.

Besides the three approaches and an analysis on three levels (frame of reference, pattern, and intellectual perspective), each approach has been analysed in terms of a) IR, b) industrial democracy, and c) teamwork. It is clear that only the *pluralist* approach with its *pluralist* frame of reference and its *integrative bargaining* is most likely to be able to lead to a democratic version of teamwork. While other IR approaches (*unitarism* and *adversarial*) have a strong tendency to lead to a non-democratic version of teamwork.

The theory of transition and Walton and McKersie's theory of collective bargaining have thus provided a useful tool to examine particular influences on the formation of team-concepts. Different IR systems were faced with the decision of whether a team-leader/teamspeaker should be elected or appointed; such a decision it seems did not depend on the will of IR actors, but on their existing IR system. On the basis of studies of transitions and collective bargaining behaviour, the most likely outcome of teamleader's or teamspeaker's selection can be predicted. In other words, the pre-teamwork IR system can lead to a certain team-concept. This can be shown in the following table:

Table 2.5.: IR Approaches

IR System	<i>unitarism</i>	<i>pluralism</i>	<i>adversarial</i>
frame of reference	family	problem-solving	trench war
IR approach	right to manage & weak or no unions	enlightened management strong unions	conflict oriented
intellectual perspective	authoritarian	democracy	inherent class conflict
industrial democracy	no institutions only consultation	co-determination institutionalised IR	no institutions decision-making by conflict
transition	non-democratic	democratic	non-democratic
attitudinal dimensions	collusion	accommodation & cooperation	conflict & aggression
degree of friendliness	intimacy & sweetheart	friendliness & neutralism	hate & antagonism
level of trust	trust & blackmail	limited or extended trust	distrust
teamwork	non-democratic	democratic	non-democratic
leaders/speaker	appointed	elected by teams	appointed

The following thesis analyses two IR systems, a democratic and a non-democratic case study in order to examine the process involved in electing teamspeakers and appointing teamleaders and their role in the structure of representation. In the study of these two IR systems, two levels of analysis are important: a) the frame of reference and b) the actual pattern in which an IR system works. Preference will be given to b) the pattern or approach of an IR system. In other words, the thesis examines the "reproduced relations between actors or collectives, organised as regular social practices" (Giddens 1979:66). The frame of reference plays an additional role. The thesis will also examine how a particular frame of reference is used by actors in IR to explain their action and positions.



**Chapter**

# 3

## **Methodology**

### 3. Research Methods

In order to explore the core research problem *teamwork and the structure of representation at two GM plants Vauxhall Ltd. (GB) and Adam Opel AG (FRG)* have to be investigated. The following chapter will develop a methodology and provide the research design for this. Applied methods and design are linked in this thesis so that it articulates the objectives and questions of the study. A connection has been established throughout the thesis between the subject matter and the relevant techniques for analysing the evidence. The methodology blends the theoretical framework (chapter 2) with the case studies (chapter 4-6) and enables the generalisation of the research findings (chapter 7). On the other hand the thesis avoids *story telling* (a let's collect data) approach (Galtung 1992) and aims to develop causal propositions supported by data and logic (Bryman 1988a:30). Research methods are important for the following thesis, however an "overconcern with methodology is like packing your bags for a journey and never making it" (Brown 1993).

#### 3.1. Methodology & Comparative Enquiry

In the preceding chapter, the theoretical problems affecting teams, groups, teamwork, industrial democracy, and IR systems have been addressed. The theory of transitions provided a useful framework for an analysis of a particular transition from a *worker-supervisor* system to a *team based system*. The theory also has predicative value for the outcomes of such a transition (cf. democratic, non-democratic). Out of a theoretical analysis of transitions a core research question has been developed: *To what extent and in what ways does the institutional context affect the transition from a traditional system of representation to teamwork and how does this affect the general structure of representation?*

The theory of transitions has acted to provide a theoretical framework in the absence of a clear relationship between theory and practice in IR (Hyman 1994a:167). Hyman's recognition of the lack of a theoretical foundation in IR investigations and the tenuous nature of Fox's model as a basis to explore industrial phenomena, results in the need to draw upon extraneous theory to develop the research problem.

*Socio-interaction theory* for example claims that a "good theory should never leave us with the idea that the world is made once and for all. A good theory will always have some empty boxes for the reality not yet there, for the potential as opposed to empirical reality" (Galtung 1992:102). Even when theory is defined as an "unambiguous set or systems of laws, integrated on the basis of a common unifying principle" (Øyen 1992:8), laws and lawlike generalisations must be open-ended. A suitable theory should not only have the power to predict outcomes, but also "should include a meta-theory reflecting on the social function of that theory as ideology" (Galtung 1992:99). Moore's work facilitates the creation of a meta-theory to examine the ideological aspects of the present research problems, while Walton and McKersie facilitate the creation of an emancipatory theory. In the thinking of the contemporary German critical theorist Jürgen Habermas, theory is considered according to its ability to diagnose the ills of society and then to form part of a process of political action for their remedy (May 1993:28). Habermas demands that a theory should be part of a process of political action to deal with practice. In the words of Marx, it is not a question of interpreting the world, but of changing it. In the tradition of the Frankfurt School, Habermas insists on the necessary emancipatory character of a theory. Moore and Walton and McKersie are similarly to Habermas concerned with the emancipatory possibilities of theory. These theories used in the present research "reject the standpoint of the observer, which characterises positive epistemology, as a valid vantage point for understanding human activities" (Burrell & Morgan 1979:5).

The theory of transitions and democracy in the area of IR and industrial democracy, demands a certain methodological approach. Transferred to IR, they demand a de-

tailed study of the social and economic conditions that affect change. Just as Moore made a detailed analysis of several class relations the present study examines the four main players in the area of IR: a) management, b) workers' representation (shop stewards, works councils, workplace representatives), c) teamleaders, d) teamspeakers.

Galtung's request for an assessment of the ideology behind a theory is important. To predict outcomes, Moore analyses the change from feudalism to capitalism, while Walton and McKersie analyse collective bargaining. While Moore's theory analyses democracy, communism and fascism, a theory focusing exclusively on capitalism (Parson) would not be able to compare the three different developments. His study is above all then a comparative study, he compares social and economic conditions not only in a single society, but in several societies before and after the transition from feudalism to modernity (cf. Øyen 1992:10). Walton and McKersie focus on capitalism when comparing collective bargaining behaviour in the USA. Unlike Walton and McKersie's US based study, Moore's comparative observations (May 1993:156) accept the importance of cross-national research. One of the key questions for comparative research is: "Does this require a different practice from other forms of research?" The *purist theory* argues that comparative work is no different from any other research. An *ethnocentric approach* "simply adds on their findings to existing ways of understanding and explaining" (May 1993:156). The *totalist approach* is on the other hand, aware of cross-national research and its methodological and theoretical pitfalls, and the *comparativists* believe that cross-national research is an important topic. As a result, they undertake this work in a different manner and frame their research questions accordingly. This description of comparative research can be applied to this research. The formulation of hypotheses was affected by the fact that the present study is a comparative study. In a study of teamwork and industrial democracy, a comparative research aims for cross-national comparisons and alters hypotheses when necessary to suit each case. Moore needed to examine a significant range of societies in order to develop his theory and thus he escapes the danger of mono-causality and

singularity. His research method is useful in its application to IR studies, because only a comparative analysis of different IR systems enables the thesis to show different outcomes.

In short, the present research follows Moore's comparative methodology using case study research to analyse the main players in IR and their relationship to each other. Further, the research compares different IR systems in order to analyse the role of teamleaders and teamspeakers. The advantages of a comparative study is that multiple case research "strengthens results by replicating the pattern-matching and yielding greater confidence on the robustness of the theory" (Yin 1993:79). The research data then will be based on field studies in England and Germany, with the main focus on GM's German plant and British plant. These plants are investigated using qualitative semi-structured interviews (appendix A and B), structured questionnaires (appendix C and D); the use of primary and secondary sources.

For such a comparative research project to be successful it is important to recognise the following aspects of social research: a) "*place*: A concentration on this dimension enables the researcher to consider the influence of physical settings upon actors, b) *language*: the more familiar researchers are with the language of a social setting the more accurate are their interpretations, c) *intimacy*: the greater the personal involvement with the group and its members, the more the researcher is able to understand the meanings and actions they undertake, d) *social consensus*: this is the extent to which the observer is able to indicate how the meanings within the culture are employed and shared among people (May 1993:123). *Places* in this research are restricted to two GM plants; *language* differences need to be taken into account because the German and English contexts create differences; for example, stewards (GB) and workplace representatives (Germany) cannot be seen as synonymous; both mean different things within different IR systems. *Intimacy* has been established by spending time in each plant, taking part in team-meeting, workplace representatives meetings, works council meetings, shop stewards meetings, living with shop stewards,

etc. *Social Consensus* has been achieved through having held office as a works council-member in the motor-car industry myself several years ago, taking part in the 1984 strike in Germany, researching Ford's engine plant in Bridgend, etc. It seems as if May's claim for intimacy and social consensus are somehow connected and both have been achieved through my own experience, internships and contacts to union representatives in Germany and England.

"To allow for the possibility of diversity and similarity, comparative analysis considers both *endogenous* and *exogenous* factors. The former are those which are peculiar to the country which is being studied, while the latter are those elements, such as international capital, gender and race relations, which while influencing that country's political relations, are not simply peculiar to it" (May 1993:158). The *endogenous* factor in the present study in terms of IR is the individual country's system, while the *exogenous* factor is the world wide introduction of teamwork in the motor-car industry (chapter 1).

Maitland (1983:19) in his study of British and German companies points out that an important consequence of his research design was, that "the two factories do not represent modal instances of the universe of British and German factories; nor are they intended to do so". In contrast to this, the case studies of this research are intended to contribute to overall statements about IR in both countries (chapter 7). A comparative study of two similar GM plants, in two different countries, with different types of teamwork are introduced and also the different affects on industrial relations in each plant. Since both plants were seeking agreements with their rank-and-file representatives they have an impact on the design of teamwork. Both plants are so-called brown field sites.

## 3.2. Defining the Research Problem

The collection of evidence to examine the research problem of teamwork and industrial democracy has focused on the car industry. With the arrival of *lean production* in Europe, teamwork has been introduced in a number of motor-car plants. The motor-car industry was selected for a study of *teamwork and industrial democracy* in particular, because of its advances in the area of teamwork. Since GM was able to gain experience from the arrival of transplants in the 1980s, this experience is now being transferred to Europe. Consequently, GM is not only the most advanced example of the plant wide introduction of teamwork, it also provides the best study of the most advanced team-concept in Britain and Germany. Within the structure of GME, the two selected plants are the major GM operations in England and Germany; the Luton and the Rüsselsheim plant. The key research question has been developed through these studies.

Comparative study involves an awareness that German IR differs significantly from IR in England; Vauxhall's and Opel's teamwork have been introduced into two different IR contexts and, it is the teamleader/teamspeaker's role that is the main focus of study. However, to compare one system of teamwork with another system of teamwork, both cannot be identical; comparative research is aware of the issue of comparing like with like. This issue is addressed in terms of *appropriateness* and *equivalence*. The purpose of *appropriateness* concerns the methods employed and the conceptualisation of issues when undertaking comparative research. Researchers cannot assume that what is appropriate for one culture will necessarily be appropriate for another. *Equivalence* is concerned with the differences between cultures, and is aware that meanings vary from culture to culture, which raises the question of language. The response to the classical objection to comparing *apples and oranges* is simple: they are *fruits*. Similarly, teamleader and teamspeaker can be compared by using a higher level of abstraction for a comparison; i.e. theories of teams and leadership. The advantage of such a comparative approach is, that findings in one country can be better un-

derstood when compared to findings from another country. A moving back and forth between two different systems of teamwork during the research enables a comparative researcher to assess both systems in a more comprehensive way. The arrival of team-leaders/teamspeakers as new players within the IR structure in the plants has affected the traditional methods of plant based problem-solving and industrial democracy. The company and union representatives basically had two choices regarding teamleaders: a) teamspeakers can be elected by the members for the team or b) teamleaders can be appointed exclusively by the management. In both cases the choices are discussed during the early phase of negotiations for a teamwork agreement. In each plant representatives went in different directions; Opel's agreement includes the election of teamspeakers, which obviously can be taken as a sign of democracy in an industry; on the other hand, Luton's appointed teamleaders are excluded from industrial democracy. In the future, Luton's elected stewards will have to negotiate with teamleaders.

Hypotheses regarding the role of teamleaders/teamspeakers as part of industrial democracy can be drawn. Various hypothesis are tested using a cause and effect model and are subject to empirical testing. The hypotheses of the present study are: a) Whether or not a teamleader is elected or appointed, a teamleader will be a new player within participation (industrial democracy) on the shopfloor. b) Whether or not a teamleader is appointed or elected, s/he will be a team and working area representative. Therefore an elected or appointed teamleader may get into conflict with an elected steward and/or an elected works council on the issue of: who represents? c) A teamspeaker who is elected, is more likely to solely represent a team, because a teamleader can be voted out. A teamleader who is appointed by the company, represents the team's interest and the company's interest at the same time. d) Whether or not an elected teamspeaker represents a team, a teamspeaker may be a representative against the company in the case of a conflict. On the other hand, if a teamleader is ap-



pointed by the company, s/he may be used against the workers in the case of conflict.

e) Whether or not a teamleader is appointed, a new form of workers control on the shopfloor may result. f) Whether or not a teamleader is appointed or elected, the area of conflict may shift more towards the shopfloor level.

To answer the research question about the effects of teamleaders/teamspeakers on industrial democracy in the two plants, appropriate evidence has been collected. As an overview the hypotheses can be placed into a matrix:

Table 3.1.: Hypotheses and Teamwork at Opel and Vauxhall

	Opel	Vauxhall
Industrial Democracy:	democratic election	authoritarian appointment
a) Teamleader and representation:	in conflict with steward and BR to a smaller extent	in conflict with steward and union
b) Who represents:	less clear option	clear option
c) Teamleader:	represents solely team-member's interest	has to represent company and team-member's interest
d) Basis of legitimacy:	legitimacy from workers	legitimacy from company
e) Control:	minor control, elected by team	high control, appointed by management
f) Conflict	shift away stewards and management towards shopfloor	shift away stewards and management towards shopfloor

### 3.3. Research Methods

For the hypotheses (a to f), plant based case studies have been used to supply sufficient data for the research. The first method used was interviews with works council-members, stewards, union officials, workplace representatives, i.e. *Vertrauensperson* (VP), plant managers, personal managers, supervisors, area managers, etc. (appendix O). For these interviews, a semi-structured questionnaire (appendix A & B) was designed and successfully used in both plants. The research method of qualitative interviews was supported by primary literature (appendix H to M) from other sources. To answer the key research question, documents as primary sources needed to be used as well. Both agreements between unions/works councils and management have been analysed; these documents lay out the formal structure of both team-concepts. Additional company, union, and works council documents were also used. Whereas, union literature often analyses teamwork's role within industrial democracy; neither secon-

dary nor primary literature are "neutral artefacts that independently report social reality (*positivism*)" (May 1993:139). Both primary sources and secondary sources have had to be critically viewed. As part of this quantitative research, supporting data was also delivered from questionnaires (appendix C & D). D. Hyman et al. argue for the "adoption of an integrated approach combining interviews, analysis of documents, attendance at meetings and informal discussions". Katz (1985:7) also suggests a mixing of methodological approaches that would provide an understanding of what might be missed by using only one methodological technique". Quantitative and qualitative research methods are the core element of the case study research project. After both methods have been applied, the collected data has been examined according to a theory of industrial democracy. Without this transfer into theory, the research question cannot be answered and a final and subsequent analysis of teamwork cannot be made. A synthesis of methods has been used as part of the two-plant-comparison. As the role of an elected teamleader differs from the role of an appointed one in regards to industrial democracy both have been examined. Since both GM plants operated different concepts of teamwork, Luton and Rüsselsheim are the ideal research objects for a comparison to provide sufficient evidence to develop the research hypotheses.

The questionnaires used were originally designed by the Canadian Autoworker's Union (CAW) and were successfully used at GM's Canadian CAMI plant (see appendix C and D) and adjusted and translated to be used at Opel and Vauxhall. This data has been sufficient to provide additional support for the case study research as well as the hypotheses (b - f). Since questionnaires are not the main tool of the present research. Questionnaires have the shortcoming that they are sent out to respondents, the researcher then has no understanding of the considerations which people make in answering the questions. The present research accepts this shortcoming. Another shortcoming of the survey method is that the answers of team-members only reflect their attitude towards teamwork at the time of the questionnaire. In order to evaluate changing attitudes towards teamwork, several surveys over a certain research period would have been needed. In contrast to interviews, a questionnaire also enforces nar-

row boundaries on team-members, so that team-members are not free to express their ideas. Given the shortcomings of the questionnaire and its strength which lies in its comparability, the two surveys supported the research findings made in the case studies.

As the key research question can hardly be answered by an exclusive use of questionnaires and quantitative research methods alone, questionnaires like interviews, are used primarily to verify statements by respondents. The theory behind the interview method is that "each person is asked questions in the same way so that any differences between the answers are then assumed to be real ones and not the result of the interview situation itself. This method is said to permit comparability between responses" (May 1993:92). Semi-structured interviews were carried out during 1992 and 1995 and were supplemented with an analysis of the records of managerial, union, and joint meetings. Attention was focused on the manual workforce, teamleaders, team-members, and especially stewards/workplace representatives. In all cases the analytical focus of the research was the plant. Semi-structured interviews were used for managers, stewards, teamleaders, and team-members.

### 3.4. Qualitative & Quantitative Research

May (1993:114) suggests, that "qualitative and quantitative methodology are not mutually exclusive. Differences between the approaches are located in the overall form, focus, and emphasis of study". The basic differences between qualitative and quantitative research is that *qualitative* research can use *participant observation* techniques and unstructured, in-depth interviewing; while *quantitative* research tends to use more quantitative survey methods. Surveys can be used in the following ways: "a) factual, b) attitudinal, c) social psychological and d) explanatory" (May 1993:67). The questionnaires used in the present study have been specifically attitudinal in order

to ascertain the view of team-members and teamleaders/teamspeakers towards teamwork. Therefore, the purpose of questionnaires is to assess the opinion of the IR actors and to create supporting data. The same questionnaires were used throughout the comparative study.

In contrast to quantitative research, qualitative research tend to espouse an approach in which theory and empirical investigation is supposed to be interwoven. Bryman (1988a:3) summarises this difference as "inquiry from the outside and inquiry from the inside". Since the research question needs to be answered from the inside, a qualitative research method is the primary method used in this study, but quantitative research has also been important as part of the empirical investigation. Qualitative research has also helped in terms of comparative study. To help generalise results, a qualitative researcher may study more than one case. The principle of *appropriateness* in answering particular research questions with either quantitative or qualitative material has been applied. The present research is not concerned with questions like worker's attitude towards teamwork, but is concerned with teamleaders/teamspeakers and established representational forms.

Bryman's (1988a:18) analysis has been applied to the present research "quantitative research is often conceptualised by it's practitioners as having a logical structure in which theories determine the problem to which researchers address themselves in the form of hypothesis derived from general theories". The thesis is concerned with the *testing* of hypotheses driven by a general theory of democracy, transition and collective bargaining behaviour. It then seeks to apply the result of this particular investigation. As one of the shortcomings of quantitative research is it's empirical emphasis on individual or group dynamics, the individual or group is not the central focus of the present study. Essential for the present study is a continuous link between *micro* and the *macro* levels; without *macro* analysis, *micro* accounts tend to become exercises in empiricism and risk piling up facts in arbitrary heaps (Ramsay 1993:78). To avoid the pitfalls of empiricism, the method used in the present research is observation of teams

and unions, etc. "In carrying out empirical research, the case study, especially the company case study, is the 'model' that characterises German industrial sociological research methods, in contrast to the survey or interview methods widely used in American sociology" (Altmann 1992:1). To same degree the present research follows the German methodological understanding of industrial sociology but also uses the American; questionnaires support the case studies, not the reverse.

As in most intensive case study research, there are necessarily contacts between researcher and participants. A central part of the research consideration is to be aware of the relations between investigators and research participants; it can be either that of: "the complete participant (engaging fully in the activities of the group) and the participant observer (this person adapts an overt role and makes her or his presence and intentions known to the group)" (May 1993:119). The present research follows the *participant observer model* because the researcher does not fully participate in the activities of the teams; team-members were informed about the presence and intentions of the research.

May's three processes have been utilised (1993:125): "The first of the stages toward this aim is the selection and definition of problems, concepts and indices. The second stage is a check on the frequency and distribution of phenomena. Thirdly, the construction of system models as the final stage of analysis in the field consists of incorporating individual findings into a generalised model of the social system or organisation under study or some part of that organisation". At the beginning of the research, contacts with teams and stewards helped to define the research problem; a further stage checked that teamwork took a variety of forms; in the final stage, the research findings from both case studies were generalised. This research draws on *socio-interaction theory* (Yin 1993:19), because researcher and participants are not separated from each other, but in a constant dialogue about the research and the changes involved in teamwork and its affects on the research.

Another qualitative method used in the present research is semi-structured interviewing in which the researcher provides some guidance and allows interviewees to give their impressions. Research is also guided by: a) examining the social industrial setting, and b) by describing events and situations that took place (May 1993:121). As well as using semi-structured interviews and unstructured interviews to build the substance of the research, both methods in the present study enable the researcher to analyse social relationships in terms of the IR actor's own interpretation of his involvement in teamwork. Therefore, semi-structured and unstructured interviews are an important element for the type of data collection used here and demand further examination as an acceptable research method.

### 3.5. The Administration of the Survey

#### a) The use of questionnaires

The purpose of the questionnaire was to supplement the central case studies, which were based on semi-structured and un-structured interviews (appendix O). There are four main reasons for the use of questionnaires (Hague 1993:11):

- a) **Accurate Information:** To draw accurate information from the respondents, i.e. to ask the right question of the right person. This was accomplished by selecting workers for questions about teamwork who had been working with teamwork for a substantial period of time in each plant. The selected workers were working in an area of production which is the most labour intensive part of can manufacturing, i.e. final assembly at Opel and Vauxhall's door-section (cf. sampling). Teamwork was introduced in both plants in 1992 and the survey was carried out in the Autumn of 1994.

- b) **Exact Question:** Team-members were asked the same questions in both plants. This involved a direct translation of the English questionnaire into German (cf. appendix C and D). However, given the different IR system in both plants, some language adaptations were necessary in order to meet the criteria established by May (chapter 3.1.).
- c) **Standard Format:** The purpose of the questionnaire was to deliver standardised information about the attitudes of team-members to teamwork.
- d) **Data Processing:** Unlike semi-structured interviews, the use of questionnaires also facilitated data processing.

#### b) The type, design and pilot-study of the questionnaire

While Easterby-Smith et al. (1993:119) distinguish between two types of questionnaire (*fact* and *opinion*), Hague (1993:29) suggests three types: a) behavioural, b) attitudinal, and c) classificatory. Since the main purpose of the present use of questionnaires is “what do people think of something?” and “what is their image and rating of those things”, the present questionnaire is an attitudinal survey, i.e. it asks about attitudes as aspects of opinions which are real to the individual who holds them (Oppenheim 1982). In other words, to address the main research question (chapter 3.2.) the questionnaire seeks to deliver additional information, but is in itself not able to provide sufficient data to answer the main research question. The attitudinal survey supports the case study, not the reverse. According to Oppenheim (1982:120) an “attitude scale consists of from half-a-dozen to two dozen or more attitudinal statements, with which the respondent is asked to agree or disagree”. In the present questionnaire, respondents were asked 24 questions in which they were offered the option of agreement or disagreement. The attitudinal questionnaire used here addresses the

following questions (Hague 1993:31): “what do you think of...?” (question 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23, 25, 26, 31); “do you agree or disagree...?” (8, 9, 15, 24, 27, 30); “how do you rate...?” (13, 16); “what is the likelihood of...?” (28, 29, 30).

Literature on research methods defines *open* and *closed* questions (McNeill 1990:26). The present questionnaire contains *open-ended* questions (1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 14, 22) and *closed* questions (3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31). The number of *open-ended* questions used in the present questionnaire is limited because the research is primarily based on two detailed case studies with interviews that contain open-ended questions (appendix A and B). The use of *closed* questions was the prime objective in the application of the survey given that *closed* questions allow for *coding* (Hague 1993:47). Both *closed* and *open-ended* questions enable *subject flow*. This is achieved by positioning general questions about teamwork (question 8 to 15) at the beginning of the questionnaire, followed by a series of questions (question 16 to 22) about team-members’ attitudes towards team-leaders (Vauxhall) and team-speakers (Opel). The survey concludes with questions (question 23 to 31) about what team-members see as the relationship between team-leaders and shop stewards (Vauxhall) and team-speakers and works council members/workplace representatives (Opel), i.e. the prime research interest.

The present questionnaire was piloted originally as part of a questionnaire to evaluate workers’ attitude towards Japanese management techniques. From a questionnaire of over 110 questions on Kaizen, Quality, etc. questions on teamwork were extracted and adapted for the two case studies of motor-car plants in Germany and Britain. That is, before the questionnaire was used at Vauxhall and Opel, it had been applied in an



earlier study in a Canadian motor-car plant (CAMI) as part of a two-year project asking workers every half year about her/his attitude towards Japanese management techniques (Robertson 1992). As the research team at CAMI were addressing a similar research question in the motor-car industry to the present, this provided a useful pilot questionnaire for the present study.

### c) Validity

The way that the validity of the survey was tested was to use the following principles (Wiseman 1979:119): 1) “no one is lying”, this principle was tested by checking the answers within each questionnaire for contradictions and by comparing these answers to the results of the interviews with *Meisters*, teamleaders, team-speakers, supervisors, team-members, etc. at the same section of production. The answers in the questionnaire were checked against the “official story” (cf. the agreement, appendix I, no. 2) Where there were discrepancies, details were double checked. 3) Virtually none of the answers given in the questionnaire “did not make sense”. In other words, most responses in the questionnaire matched the responses in the interviews. 4) It was also assumed that respondents did “the best they could” to fill in the questionnaire, which was cross-referenced with other questions. 5) None of the survey results was regarded as “truly irrelevant to the study”, because questions from the survey were directly directly to the research question and to the hypotheses (cf. chapter 7.5. a-f). Therefore answers from the questionnaires were considered relevant to the research. 6. While the research was guided by the principle that “there is no such thing as absolute truth”, by comparing the survey results with the interview results and the company’s documents, the research can claim to have satisfied the above criteria of validity.

In addition three other criteria to establish validity were applied: a) *Face validity*; this was achieved by using the questionnaire and its application in the research, i.e. as an additional source of information. b) *Convergent validity*; this was done by comparing the survey results with the results produced by using other research methods (interviews, documentation, literature, etc.). c) *Validation by known groups*. Although this principle demands the application of a questionnaire to groups that differ from the groups researched (i.e. workers with no experience of teamwork), the survey results were compared with information gathered by interviewing (appendix a and b) respondents with no experience of teamwork (appendix O). These interviews took place during the complete period of the thesis, because neither Opel nor Vauxhall had introduced the team-concept by mid-1995. These interviews were conducted in Opel's warehouse, paint-shop and stamping-plant and at Vauxhall's paint-shop and soft and hard trim (cf. chapter 4.1.4.) where Vauxhall had selected teamleaders but had not introduced teamwork by the time of the research.

Easterby-Smith et al. (1993:41) focus on two theoretical differences in the issue of validity. The present research satisfies both criteria: a) According to *positivist* criteria the questionnaire used did what it was supposed to do; the survey delivered additional information to answer the research question. b) By asking questions to team-members who had worked with teamwork for a considerable time on the assembly line in both plants, full access was gained to the knowledge and meaning of the informants (phenomenological approach).

#### d) Sampling

The questionnaire uses a *sample* of team-members in both plants in order “to obtain information from, or about, a defined set of people, or population” (Easterby-Smith et al. 1993:122). The target population (Moser and Kalton 1989:53) were the team-members on the assembly lines in both Vauxhall and Opel. As a *survey population*, team-members working with teamwork for the longest period of time were selected. In the case of Vauxhall, the production area with the most experience of teamwork was the Door-Module-Section (a sub-section of final assembly). At the time of the survey, Vauxhall’s final assembly had selected teamleaders and had begun to set up team-meetings. In short, teamwork on Vauxhall’s final assembly line was not advanced enough for the application of an attitudinal survey focusing on questions about a team-members’ relationship to her/his teamleader, etc. In the case of Opel final assembly on the Omega-line was chosen, where teamwork was introduced at the same time as at Vauxhall’s door-section. a) No *random* sampling was done (Moser and Kalton 1989:63).

b) *Stratified samples*, i.e. the distribution of questionnaires to a small sample group. This was done at Vauxhall: 70 to 80 per shift, i.e. 140 to 160 team-members were targeted as the population and shop stewards distributed the questionnaires to team-members on both shifts. At Opel: 29 teams with seven members on average (i.e. 203 team-members in one shift, one works council member per shift) were chosen as the population. In both populations (Vauxhall: ~150 team-members and Opel: ~203 team-members) 100 questionnaires were distributed and collected through the works council in Germany and through shop stewards in Vauxhall. In other words, between 71.4 % and 62.5 % of all team-members in Vauxhall’s sample group were asked to fill

in the questionnaire. At Opel, 49.3 % of all team-members were asked the same questions. The questionnaire (at Opel) was distributed (September 1994), collected (September to October) and processed (end of October). At Vauxhall, the questionnaire was distributed (November 1994), collected (November) and processed in November. In both plants (Vauxhall's door-section and Opel's final assembly Omega-line) union-membership is above 97 %. Consequently, questions relating to union or non-union membership had no relevance. In both cases, the works council and shop stewards were asked to return 50+ questionnaires, because this number seems to be sufficient to a) cover enough team-members at Vauxhall's door-section and Opel's final assembly and b) provide a satisfactory basis to assist the main research question and the hypothesis (chapter 3.2.). The distribution resulted in 53 returned questionnaires at Vauxhall and 57 at Opel. The *response rate* (above 50 %) seems acceptable (McNeill 1990:40). The results were analysed (value, frequency, percentage, validity percentage, etc.) using the statistical software SPSS/PC+ (cf. Foster 1992).

The two remaining forms of sampling are c) *quota sampling* (for example the first 20 who enter the station at 8:00 am) and d) *cluster sampling* (asking all members of a unit) were not used.

### 3.6. Access

Access is a key issue, *if there is no access, there is no case study research*, as many methodologists have postulated (Øyen 1992:1; Beynon 1988:26; Lawrence 1988:100; Buchanan et al. 1988:56). Access to Opel was based on a long term relationship between the researcher and works council which was first established during the 1984 strike for a 35-hour-week. On the basis of this contact, access was not a question of

negotiation, but of a short discussion prior to the start of the research. In this research, personnel managers were interviewed; but union representatives, work council members, and teamleader were the primary sources. Since the case studies are concerned with teamwork and industrial democracy and teamwork that in both cases were introduced by management the research relied also on interviews with personnel managers. One problem of access was that union representation and works councils were sometimes reluctant to participate and concerned about confidentiality. Access for the British case study was arranged through a union contact established during an internship in FORD in 1989. Contacts with the TGWU (FORD) made the contact with the TGWU (Vauxhall) possible. TGWU as well as works council access enabled research visits to several motor-car plants (see: Chronology of Research). Once inside Vauxhall, even access to production managers was possible, although not necessary for this research. However, interviewing people not functionally connected with teamwork often provided interesting insights into teamwork.

Another important aspect of comparative research was participation in meetings and observing managers on a daily basis. Access to meetings at Opel's bi-weekly works councils-management meetings was given. In the case of Vauxhall, meetings between management and union representation took place very rarely and not at the time of my visits. In the case of these meetings, interviews with Vauxhall's personnel manager and union representation during other visits to the plant provided the necessary information. There were also meetings where access to researchers were denied, especially those on the future developments of teamwork. The final question with regard to access was the question of the timing of withdrawal from a research site. A departure from the research site cannot be too early as important developments like the reduction of team size in parts of the German plant (by mid-1994) would be missed. However, as a deadline, the end of 1994 seemed an appropriate time for withdrawal from the research sites, but since developments on the issue of teamwork were still taking place during the spring of 1995, research contacts to both sites was maintained.

## 3.7. Chronology of Research

Information on the motor-car industry was collected from various research, plant visits, internships, and from the UAW/Detroit and TGWU at Ford-Bridgend. Since this research gained from that experience, a chronology of the research follows:

Table 3.2.: Research Chronology

1988	USA	UAW-Research Dept., Detroit: Five months internship
Oct. 1988	USA	Chrysler-Kenosha: Discussion with UAW convenor, stewards, etc.
Nov. 1988	USA	FORD River Rouge and various GM plants
Jan. 1989	Japan	Honda plant in Kyushu: Tour by management.
Mar. 1989	GB	FORD-engine-plant/Bridgend: One month internship, research: Stewards & TGWU
Mar. 1989	GB	FORD-Halewood: Discussion with TGWU convenor and stewards.
May 1992	GB	Visit at Warwick University to discuss research proposal for PhD
June 1992	FRG	Opel Discussion of research proposal with BR-members
Sept. 1992	Japan	Nissan plant in Kyushu, discussion with management
Oct. 1992	GB	Start of research at the School of Industrial and Business Studies, Warwick University
December 1992	GB	Vauxhall: interviews with TGWU, visit <i>door section</i> , interview with manager on <i>door-section</i> , phone discussion with GM's QNPS' representative for teamwork, interview with Personnel Manager, attended stewards meeting, interview with MSF and AEEU convenor.
Dec. 1992	FRG	Opel: Interview with BR-members and personnel manager teamwork.
Jan. 1993	FRG	Opel: Interview with BR, interview with BR, member delegated to the issue of teamwork, interview with manager for teamwork, visit at <i>door-section</i> , attended VP meeting (final assembly, Omega-line), discussion with consulting firm on teamwork, video presentation about teamwork and discussions
January 1993	GB	Vauxhall: Interview with manager of QNPS, TGWU-convenor, personnel manager, MSF representative, visit <i>door-section</i> in the plant, interviews with TGWU-steward at the <i>door-section</i> , manager, team-members at the <i>door-section</i>
Feb. 1993	GB	IBC-Luton: Tour by management, interview with production manager.
Mar. 1993	GB	Jaguar-Birmingham: Tour by TGWU convenor and discussion.
Mar. 1993	GB	Land Rover (Coventry): Discussion with TGWU-convenor and stewards.
July-August 1993	FRG	Opel: Internship at Opel's BR for two months: Visit <i>door-section</i> , interview with BR-member, manager, attended joint management-BR committee on teamwork (Lenkungsausschuss), interview with BR-member delegate to union, i.e. VP, spend several days with BR-members (four) at final assembly area, attended VP meetings at final assembly, interview with BR-member delegated to the issue of teamwork and BR-members at final assembly (Omega and Vectra), attended joint management-BR committee on teamwork (Lenkungsausschuß) in parts shop, attended VP-meeting in press shop, interview with BR-member at press shop attended VP-meeting in body shop, interview with BR-member for body shop attend BR-meeting concerning teamwork, attended joint teamspeaker training by management and BR, attended joint management-BR committee on teamwork (Lenkungsausschuss) for the Rüsselsheim plant, interview with manager of teamwork and manager for organisational development,
9. July 94	FRG	Attended One Day Teamspeaker Training at GM's Training Centre/Rüsselsheim
15. July 94	FRG	Attended Opel's plant wide works meeting
August 1993	FRG	IGM's head-office/Frankfurt: Interview with union representative for teamwork and works councils in the German car industry.
August 1993	FRG	Opel-Eisenach: Tour and interview by BR-member, discussion with TGWU delegates from the Vauxhall-Luton plant during their visit in Eisenach,
August 1993	Austria	GM-Aspern (engine & gearboxes): Plant tour by BR interview with BR convenor, discussion with BR-members.
September 1993	FRG	Mercedes-Benz: Plant tour by BR, interview with BR-member for teamwork, discussion with BR-members,
Jan. 1994	Japan	Toyota, Kyushu: Plant tour by union representative, interview with union representatives.
January 1994	Japan	Toyota, Tsutsumi-Plant in Toyota City: Tour by management, discussion with Union in the plant, visit union headquarters and Toyota's company headquarters, discussion with management.
February 1994	GB	Rover, Cowley Plant in Oxford: Tour by management, discussion with management, discussion with AEEU representative.
March 1994	GB	Rolls Royce in Crewe: Tour by teamleader, discussion with convenor and stewards from AEEU, MSF and TGWU
April 1994	GB	Peugeot (Coventry): Interview with personnel manager, tour & interview with TGWU-convenor, discussion with AEEU and TGWU-stewards.
May 1994	FRG	Opel: Interview with teamwork manager, discussion with BR-member for teamwork.
July 1994	GB	Toyota Motors in Derbyshire: Tour by management, discussion with management.
Sep. 1994	FRG	Opel: Interview with manager (OB) and BR on the changes of teamwork.
November 1994	GB	One week visit at Vauxhall, interviews with TGWU-convenor, stewards, AEEU convenor, personnel manager, personnel development manager, visit at <i>door-section</i> , visit at IBC, interview with TGWU-convenor
November 1994	GB	Discussions on Teamwork with stewards at TGWU seminar: <i>New Working Practices within the Components Industry</i> , National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham
January 95	FRG	Opel: discussion on development of teamwork with representative of <i>Organisational Development</i> and works council.
March 95	FRG	Official plant tour at Opel and discussion with representative of personnel department and BR on wages and teamwork
Sep. 1995	GB	End of Research

**Chapter**

# **4**

## **The Introduction of Teamwork**

## 4. Teamwork at General Motors

GM has, over time, accumulated significant experience in teamwork. In the late 1980s, GM had over twenty plants operating teamwork with some 30,000 employees in the USA. In Europe, the engine plant in Austria, which opened in 1982 was chosen, to serve as the pioneer plant in Europe to introduce teamwork. According to Eisenach's works council-member Böckel (1993), it was a pilgrimage location for visitors until Opel-Eisenach was built. GM's central policy has been to introduce teamwork into all European plants, however it is clear that different IR systems and different union responses have varied widely and have affected the adaption of the system.

For GM-Austria, Alfons Würzel (Automobil 1992:26) noted, "teamwork reduces production costs, increases quality and suggestions compared to non-teamwork plants". GM-Austria was set up before the *Japanese challenge* arrived in Europe and GM and Isuzu jointly own IBC (Isuzu-Bedford-Commercial Vehicles), adjacent to Vauxhall-Luton. Although Vauxhall and IBC belong to the same company, there are limited contacts between them. IBC's teamwork was introduced in 1986 which influenced Vauxhall's agreement between management and the unions (AEU, ASTMS, EETPU, TASS and the TGWU) with the *Van Operation New Employee Agreement*.

In all European GM plants, responsibilities were transferred to teams, but even at its best, the new system can only be described as creating partial autonomy which is controlled by rigid time standards and is increasingly subject to electronic monitoring. Despite all the discussions about teamwork, the old structure of management hierarchy was maintained (FR 1994). In Europe and the USA, a GM employee involvement programme was installed using workgroup problem-solving techniques (Scarborough 1992:66). GM held extensive discussions whether or not to adapt a Swedish style of teamwork (Berggren 1992:179), or a Toyota style. Teamwork as an *organisational behavioural* issue should not affect the old patterns of production. GM's intention for the introduction of teamwork was strongly influenced by its experience in the USA,



IBC's teamwork on the other hand is shaped by ISUZU and Opel-Eisenach's teamwork is modelled on GM's NUMMI and CAMI plants. In both cases, GM was able to install a new version of teamwork independent from Vauxhall's management and unions and from Opel's management and works council/trade union. However, Opel-Rüsselsheim and Vauxhall-Luton are typical examples of how teamwork was introduced into GM plants in Europe.

## 4.1. Teamwork at Vauxhall

Since the arrival of lean production and the setting up of Nissan's UK factory, most major car manufacturers have introduced *lean production* methods (IRS/534 1993:5), of which teamwork is a central feature. Drawing directly from lean production, Vauxhall's management sees teamwork "as an important part of the new manufacturing system that will allow the company to be a producer of World Class Quality products" (Vauxhall 1990:13). In the 1980s, Ellesmere Port and IBC introduced teamwork before Luton by reaching their own separate agreements. Teamwork outlined in the Ellesmere's V6 agreement called *The New Employee Agreement*, resembles IBC's teamwork agreement introduced in 1987 which obviously influenced the arrangements at the Luton factory. (Vauxhall 1992).

The Ellesmere V6 teamwork agreement is by far the most important for Luton's *Working Together to Win* document. According to Vauxhall's personnel director Warman (1993): "IBC introduced teamwork before Vauxhall and initially provided a model for us". However, the teamwork at IBC was not successful in the 80s' and Ellesmere's V6 agreement was chosen as a successful model which was introduced at the same time as the new V6 engine. As an incentive for worker's acceptance for Ellesmere's V6, Luton's management offered a wage increase; workers at Ellesmere Port received a 5 % wage increase, workers at Luton received the same.

Besides the general statement in the Ellesmere V6 agreement that "teamwork will bring competitive costs, secure customer satisfaction, and contribute to the long term viability of the company and long term job security for it's Employees". (Vauxhall 1990:13), the document included fundamental principles which Vauxhall saw as important principles of teamwork (Vauxhall 1990:14): "All team-members (5-15) share the responsibility for work performance by the team, rotating jobs within the team, continually striving for improvement in operations cost, quality and productivity". The teamleader as a member of the team would share these responsibilities. Teamwork at

GM's aftersale warehouse demonstrated the way that teamleaders would be selected; there also was also a clear definition of the different roles of teamleaders and supervisors. For example, a teamleader's responsibility is "when necessary, to assist with employee reviews, disciplinary hearings, etc.", whereas supervisors can "conduct appraisals of employees in line with procedure" (Aftersale 1992:87).

### 4.1.1. The Introduction of Teamwork

After the abandonment of teamwork at IBC and its successful introduction at Ellesmere, Luton's agreement was modelled on Ellesmere's V6. According to Vauxhall's personnel director Warman (1993) Luton's teamwork is in fact an improved version of the Ellesmere agreement. During the introduction of teamwork at Vauxhall, GME refused to be involved directly on the basis of allowing different sites to manage their own IR. Although all European personnel managers meet on a regular basis and visits from GME are on a frequent basis, they argue that "GME leaves industrial relations and personnel to local GM plants and does not give detailed guidelines for that" (Warman 1993). According to Vauxhall's teamwork-manager Eglington (1992), GME did not have a time schedule or a detailed and structured plan for teamwork; GME however did develop a guiding booklet called *Teamwork*, which is part of a series on *lean production* or QNPS. QNPS's predecessor *The Quality Network* had expressed management intentions to introduce teamwork to the unions in 1988. In March 1990, QNPS were introduced and a set of goals were laid down: increase quality, eliminate waste, create continuous improvement (Kaizen); improved internal communication, workplace organisation, and problem-solving, and introduce teamwork. While all these were related to production, attention was directed to teamwork as an issue of central importance.

Before introducing teamwork, companies often conducted attitudinal surveys to assess the mood of the plant and the degree of willingness to accept teamwork. Vaux-

hall employed the *Neil Gardner Employee Communication* as advisors on teamwork in the summer of 1991 (27. June to 12. July) to conduct an *Internal Communication Survey* asking each worker to complete a questionnaire containing 31 questions. Before introducing teamwork, Vauxhall's employees were aware of the following: the experience of the IBC agreement, the experience of the Ellesmere Port V6 agreement, i.e. *The New Employee Agreement*, the profit sharing scheme, the Quality Network, the QNPS, and the Internal Communication Survey.

Management itself was divided over the introduction of teamwork, some arguing for teamwork and a 5 % wage increase; others arguing that productivity could be increased without teamwork. Since Ellesmere had offered a pay rise, Luton had to offer the same to introduce teamwork. Even though workers received a 5 % wage increase as an incentive to accept the system, the wage structure at Luton remained unaffected by teamwork because all assembly line workers remained in the same wage level (CP = 6,39 pounds/hour). So did the electrical skills section, the mechanical skills section, etc. In the first year of teamwork, there were no mixed skilled teams and this has not changed; the skilled trades (AEEU) remained in the same wage group.

Negotiations to introduce teamwork took six months at Ellesmere and teamwork was officially introduced on the 7th September 1992 after agreement was reached between management and AEEU, MSF, and TGWU. A ballot for teamwork was taken on the 1st and 2nd September 1992 and the result was announced on the 4th September. Each union voted separately. Together with Luton's *Working together to win* (7. September 1992) and Vauxhall's Luton *aftersale warehouse* agreement (28. September 1992), all of the British GM locations introduced teamwork. By the end of 1992 Luton's teamwork system, with company appointed teamleaders, was installed.

## 4.1.2. The Teamwork Agreement

The agreement to operate teamwork at Vauxhall is defined by an agreement signed by all the participating unions. In the introduction the role of the union is clarified: "The trade unions, as the representatives of employees have an integral part to play in this agreement" (Vauxhall 1992). Vauxhall expresses high hopes that: teamwork "will allow the company to be a producer of World Class Quality products at a competitive price, contributing to long term job security for its employees" (Vauxhall 1992). In this optimistic eulogy in the introduction to the agreement, employee involvement is presented as having the ability to "impact the success of the business through decision making" (Vauxhall 1992). While Vauxhall in this document clearly expressed the desire to involve its workers at a higher level; in reality this involvement was controlled by the company's own management plan.

In describing employees as the "most important investment and resource and a critical part of the operational process", Vauxhall was seeking what a German unionist Kohlbacher (1993) had identified as: *the gold in worker's brain*; to harvest this *gold* more efficiently, the traditionally individualised workers were placed in teams. According to Vauxhall's employee service manager Knapman (1994), teams which are comprised of 5 and 15 members and have 8 members on average sharing responsibilities for (Vauxhall 1992):

- 
- Work performed by the team, subject to any work measurement system in operation at the time.
  - Rotating jobs within the team and, where necessary, between teams within job classification.
  - Ensuring quality of team output.
  - Maintaining a safe, clean and tidy work area.
- 

Teams are described as groups of employees working as *natural* workgroups. Each team-member is made responsible for production related issues; s/he is employed primarily to carry out production tasks, such as material handling, etc. In moving away

from Taylor's division of hand and brain and the complete segregation of labour functions, teamwork seemed to set up more general responsibilities for workers.

For example, workers are made responsible for their own efficiency through identifying any wasted time, unnecessary walks to material boxes, wasted materials, etc. This process was intended to get team-members themselves to abolish any non-value-added-labour, i.e. to do their own time and motion study. Non-value-added-motions are distinguished in management's definition from value-added-motions; value-added-motions are identified as direct operations on the car; non-value-added-motions are operations which do not add any direct *value* to the car, i.e. unnecessary walks to material-boxes, waiting time, etc. By reducing non-value-added-motions, production it is argued, becomes more efficient, i.e. more time is spend directly on the product. In other words, each small break, each small step aside, each minute of recreation on the assembly line must be identified and abolished. By reducing such *waste*, production would not only be more efficient, but work will be more intense. This is seen by management as developing efficient work methods in conjunction with a system of suggestions and methods which are displayed on the team board; Standard Operations Sheets (SOS) analyse all motions on the assembly line to eliminate waste. This is done in team-meetings during working hours, but voluntary meetings may also be held off work time if necessary. After having analysed one complete operation, teams discuss the task of a particular worker and try to improve the task. Team-members also carry out product-inspection, repair, and minor maintenance. The extension of the workers' role from a task-oriented one such as a machine operator on an assembly line to that described above involves an increased "demand for job knowledge" to "fulfil all jobs within the team" and is asking the workers to monitor and manage themselves, i.e. a complete redefinition of worker's role.

Vauxhall's teamwork-manager Eglington (1993), uses the *football-metaphor* to describe the role of teamleaders. "The teamleader is an integral part of the team and has a full and active role within that team" (Vauxhall 1992); i.e. the captain plays on the

field with the team; teamleaders are not the coaches of teams but the captains. While teamleaders could play the part of coach it is likely then that they would be seen as a non-productive new supervisor rather than if they are actively working as part of a team.

For management to justify the existence of a teamleader, their duties have to be precisely defined. Their role is clearly defined. They must be able to: perform all operations within the team; to support and represent teams; to work with other teamleaders, supervisors, and other employees; to encourage individuals to meet their responsibilities with regard to quality, cost, productivity, metal-scrap reduction, training, job rotation, performance, to maintaining schedules, and safety. Teamleader's responsibilities are thus expanded into the responsibilities of the traditional supervisor.

Teamleaders are also asked to regulate internal matters, e.g. disputes. As teamwork involves this element of IR, all aspects of how teams and teamleaders is of great of interest to the Trade Unions (Vauxhall 1992). Consequently they argue that all the usual representational procedures must still apply after the introduction of teamwork, i.e. shop stewards theoretically retain there powers as described in the teamwork agreement (Vauxhall 1992):

- 
- Problem-solving in the areas of employee job related problems.
  - Obtaining and co-originating necessary supplies, required maintenance and technical support to ensure continuous efficient operations.
  - Accepting responsibility for the working operation of the team.
  - Accommodating employee absences where appropriate.
  - Communicating job related information to team-members.
  - The Unions accept that the Company will establish through agreement a selection criterion for teamleaders. The selection of teamleaders will be on the basis of these agreed criteria. Applications will be sought and all applicants will be interviewed.
- 

Vauxhall's agreement explicitly deals with the role of union representation under teamwork. Teams and especially teamleaders can carry out responsibilities related to union representation; shop stewards have to deal with teamleaders and supervisors

after the transition to teamwork; previously stewards had only to deal with supervisors. With teamwork, teamleaders and supervisors will share management's responsibilities, thus the stewards must negotiate with supervisors and teamleaders.

With this formal teamwork structure, supervisors as a hierarchical layer do not completely disappear, even though their number is reduced. Often supervisors are given the overall responsibility of managing a small number of teams. While teams are represented by teamleaders, supervisors maintain their responsibility for disciplinary actions, control of performance standards, corrective action, personnel issues, selecting new team-members, engineering change, administration of salary/wage changes, etc. Even though teamwork shifts many responsibilities to teams and especially to teamleaders, crucial issues such as reviewing employee's performance for the purpose of personal development and wage progression remain in the sphere of the supervisors; the power to *hire and fire* remains with them, too, through their control of appointment and disciplinary procedures.

### 4.1.3. Teamwork in Practice

Although the agreement lays out the formal structure of teamwork, it differs widely from teamwork in practice. One fundamental change away from the control mechanisms of Taylorism has been the abolition of the system of *clocking-on*. In March 1993 teamleaders were made responsible for absence control. It is important to note that the movement towards a teamleaders' control of absenteeism did not in fact affect the rate of absenteeism because absentee rates remained the same (i.e. 5 %) after the abolition of the *clocking-on* (1992). This was, according to Vauxhall's teamwork-manager Eglington (1992), "expected to decline after the introduction of teamwork, because of the use of pressure on the workers from the teamleader". However, in 1993 there was no major change.



Within this teamwork system management did not decide to introduce mixed-skilled teams, thus job classification remains unchanged. "Flexibility and mobility calls for employees to carry out functions other than their normal duties both inside and outside their classification" (Vauxhall 1992:10). This was not intended to change job classifications, but to soften it. In practice, the traditional hierarchy was maintained and so were the segregated roles of union members; TGWU production workers were not mixed into teams with AEEU skilled workers. Rotation of team-members, however, within the team, was introduced in Vauxhall's agreement (p. 18), IBC's agreement (p. 28), and Ellesmere's agreement (p. 14). Even though Luton's agreement demands rotation, in practice team-members did not rotate in 1992. Rotation again has been seen as a positive practice by management in terms of ensuring that workers are like *interchangeable parts* of an efficient machine.

Teams did not have team-meetings in the first year of the Vauxhall agreement. The management position on this is stated by the QNPS manager Hart (1993): "team-meetings are not necessary for the existence of the team, because the team-members can see each other all the time". This reveals management's reluctance to increase the power of the teams or strengthen its internal dynamics as a unit of representation. Vauxhall's personnel manager acknowledged early union resistance to teamwork (cf. Wood 1991:592), which was initially on the grounds of insufficient numbers to carry out the scheme in 1993.

Even though teamwork was set up, Vauxhall did not explicitly acknowledge the need for further training for the system to succeed, Vauxhall's teamwork-manager Eglington (1993) did introduce a training scheme during the reduction of working hours due to the recession of 1993 to "improve the team building process"; i.e. when there was unpaid time available. This team training was not installed as vocational training, but was part of management's plan to increase co-operation ideals (Warman 1993); hence the training was oriented towards selling a corporate identity.

After the first year of teamwork, then, teams were partly made responsible for absence control and a whole range of minor self-management issues to increase efficiency, but workers still held clear traditional job classifications and their wage structure had not altered. There was no team rotation and there were no team-meetings. In short, Vauxhall's teamwork basically converted former group, utility-leaders or *charge-hands* to teamleaders and previous work units into teams; the only difference was an extension of worker's role for greater production efficiency.

### 4.1.3.1. Teamwork in Practice at the Door-Section

Vauxhall's most advanced developments on teamwork were initiated at the door-section where a pilot-scheme for teamwork took place in (May 1992). The section operated with a standard two shift pattern. The main function of this department is removing doors from the cars and assembling them separately; the door-section assembles doors on a parallel running assembly line. In the initial planning stage only previously selected teamleaders, managers, and supervisors were included in the experiment and shop stewards were completely excluded from the project. This planning agreed:

- 
- the parameters of the new production system,
  - the required labour,
  - that training of man power occurring on the line,
  - the organisation of teams,
  - the layout of the line production.
- 

During the initial stage, the supervisor faced two problems. On the one hand, some of the top and middle management opposed the new production methods including teamwork. According to the supervisor on the door-section Lalji (1992), supervisors

became aware that they were dealing with a new structure of IR which would affect their own position.

The original planning agreement added two supervisors to the 80 existing workers per shift who were supplied by the internal labour market. Workers were selected from all over the plant and none had any previous experience of teamwork. This *on-the-job* experience was used as the main training method. Team discussions about work tasks was held, problems were solved and a suggestion scheme introduced, which resulted in many improvements, for example: material delivery to the line, position of the delivered material, height of the doors, the existence of team-meeting rooms, etc. At this initial planning stage, stewards were not present at team discussions. Without participation by stewards, Vauxhall was able to set up a new production process on their own, while stewards as the traditional workers' representative, who could normally have controlled or monitored these processes and questioned management's intentions were excluded.

The official start of teamwork on the assembly line was on the 14th of July 1992. Productivity by the end of 1992 had reached sixty doors per hours, compared with forty-seven doors per hour on a similar line without teamwork. According to the original agreement, the teams were required to rotate members. The door-section was for a long time the only place where workers actually rotated. In some teams, team-members refused to be rotated, because workers wanted to keep their existing jobs. According to TGWU-steward Russell (1993), they were afraid that "quality would fall because operators do not know how to do each other's job". Vauxhall's door-section supervisor Lalji (1993) claimed that supervisors needed to fulfil the requirements of the agreement and ordered rotation. Lalji (1993) agreed that management used heavy pressure to enforce rotation: "if a team-member rejects rotation, I transfer him to a heavy job until s/he agrees to rotate". Team-members had no power to organise rotation themselves, this power remained firmly in the hands of the supervisors who intervened in teams issue, i.e. top-down management control.

After the initial phase, Vauxhall planned to make reductions in the workforce. Between the 12th of July and 25th of December 1992 the workforce was reduced by 12 workers. On one team, the reduction of team-members was discussed among the team themselves; the team discussed their assigned task in relation to its members and asked for a reduction of team size. The teams were encouraged to do this with financial incentives from management. During discussions, the team decided to remove two team-members and reduce it from nine to seven members. The expected rewards would be equally distributed amongst all nine members. This suggestion was presented to and accepted by management. After the team was reduced to seven members, the team then reached the decision to distribute the reward of £ 700 among the remaining members; the two team-members who had to leave joined other teams but did not receive a share in the financial reward for the original suggestion. Stewards were of course not able to influence this process because management could argue that the team decided on the reduction and the reward sharing method. Team-meetings were held weekly (5 to 20 minutes) during breaks, hence management used recreation time to utilise work related discussions of benefit to itself.

Under the agreement, teamleaders had to be *appointed* for the door-section, but this process resulted in a dysfunctional link between teams and teamleaders. For example, in one case, "the team started with a co-ordinator and got into a routine, but later a teamleader was added from outside to the team and we had to show him what to do" (interview: Russell 1993). This type of teamwork started with the disadvantage of not having a teamleader who *naturally* emerges from the team. This resulted in the often expressed view that teamleaders were assigned to control and monitor teams. In the words of the team-member Russell (1993): "We are the team and someone is watching us, i.e. the teamleader". Teamleaders were seen as an *outsider* whose loyalty was to management.

The teamleader's job was also often not established in accordance with the original agreement, and teamleaders tend to adapt the role of the coach and not the role of the captain. One task of the teamleader, which was regulated in the agreement, was to cover for absent workers. If more than one team-member was absent, another teamleader from another team had to cover. As far as absentee-coverage was concerned, teamwork did meet with the requirements as outlined in the agreement. Besides filling in for absent operators teamleaders also "organised the material flow to the line and control quality" (interview: Russell 1993). One of the incentives for workers to be teamleaders is not to work directly on the assembly line. Nevertheless, according to Russell (1993), "if a teamleader does not work on the line, he struggles because he is no longer an integral part of the team". Since in most cases teamleaders do not work on the line, team-members often feel that teamleaders do not contribute enough" (interview: Russell 1993). Further in a "company appointed teamleader regime" teams can never meet without the *external* control of a teamleader. In addition to the external control, TGWU-steward Russell (1993) noted, the team "cannot remove the teamleader", because s/he is appointed.

The teamleader is one of the central features of teamwork and the manner of his/her selection is vital to the success of teamwork. On Gulowsen's (1979) scale (chapter 2.1.1.1) no participation by the team in selecting the teamleader means total control by management. Research applying this scale to 19 motor-car factories (Murakami 1995) shows Vauxhall ranks very low in terms of participation and democracy in terms of new members, distribution of work, time flexibility, acceptance of additional work, representation, methods of production, output, and quality, Vauxhall's teams tend to rank below average (see appendix N4). In summary, teams on the door-section are given less autonomy compared to other plants. For teamleader selection, the average level of autonomy ranges between participation (2) and co-decision-making (3), but Vauxhall's teams are subject to management's decision (1).

A survey (appendix A & B) to ascertain the stability of teams asked (question: 4): Has the number of people on your team changed since your last meeting? Only 30 % said yes, 56 % said that the number of people on their team had not changed. Since the teams were newly composed by selecting workers from all over the plant and organising them into teams and *Kaizen*-activities often demanded changes among teams, stable teams had still not been achieved by the time the questionnaire was completed. During the introduction of teamwork, when team-meetings were scheduled, 28 % of the workers said they had been required to attend such meetings and 61 % said they were not required to attend (question: 8). The agreement clearly states that team-meetings can be scheduled outside of work time, but that attendance is on a voluntary basis. Most of the time, team-meetings are held after work and only 24 % of team-members attend; 54 % said that they do not always attend.

Workers were also asked (question: 11) what was their theoretical position on teamwork, i.e. about the idea of working in a team (How much do you like the idea of working as part of a team?) 14.8 % of Vauxhall's workers said *very much*, most workers said *somewhat* (44.4%) and around 40 % said either *not much* (20.4 %) or *not at all* (18.5 %). The results of question (12): how much do you like being a member of your team? are similar. 27.8 % of the workers said *very much*, 35 % said *somewhat*, 22.2 % said *not much* and only 11.1 % said *not at all*. In short, over 60 % of Vauxhall's workers like the idea of working in a team or being a member of a team *very much* or *somewhat*, while only 30 % like the idea *not much* or *not at all*.

When asked: is there a pressing issue that your team was dealing with now? 17 % said yes there is a pressing issue (question: 10), 72 % said *no*. Since Vauxhall operates team-meetings largely outside work time, this may explain why workers' attendance is low and most workers do not feel that they have to attend meetings, do not have a *pressing issue* to take to meetings. This strategy has not only affected the amount of involvement by workers but the tendency not to identify or be involved in issues that affect the workplace.

When asked (question: 13): How often have there been serious disagreements between members of your team? 35 % said either *sometimes* or *not much* and 61 % said either *once in a while* or *not at all*. Since production work on the line does not give workers room for *working together* as a team and team-meetings are not well attended there are few occasions when their affairs are really discussed, this again may explain why there are few serious agreements or disagreements.

When the relatively newly composed teams were asked (question: 17): *Do you think there should be a teamleader?* 40.7 % said *yes* there should be a teamleader but more than half (51.9 %) disagreed. Not surprisingly given this answer team-members do not want to be teamleaders, because to question (18): *Would you like to become a teamleader?* only 7.4 % said *yes* and 85.2 % said *no*. However, the position on the mode of appointment of teamleaders was very clear; 75.9 % said they thought teamleaders should be elected from the workforce (question: 19); while only 13 % disagreed with the election of teamleaders. In addition (question: 20), 44.4 % rejected the notion of team-member rotation (*Do you think that teamleaders should be rotated? Do you think that everyone should get a chance at being the teamleader?*), but 38.9 % favoured this idea (question: 20). It seems as if workers were unsure in the first place about the value of a teamleader, but they do not want themselves to be teamleaders either because they identify it as a management role or they do not want greater responsibility, but if there are teamleaders they clearly want them to be elected.

Additional questions about the selection process of teamleaders asked (question: 21): *Do you think that the current system for selecting teamleaders is a fair one?* 68.5 % of them said: *no* and 16.7 answered *yes* (no response 14.8 %). In summary, team-members not only disagreed with the institution of teamleaders, but also with the existing mode of appointment. Since the relationship between team-members and teamleaders seems to be problematic, the following questions focused more specifically on this relationship:

Table 4.1.: Teamleaders and Team-Members at Vauxhall (in %)

Question (16): How often...	all the time	often	once in a while	never
a) do you get along with your teamleader?	24.1	29.6	35.2	3.7
b) does your teamleader help you with your job?	3.7	20	50	16.7
c) does your teamleader co-operate with you?	9.3	27.8	42.6	7.4
d) do you get the sense your teamleader respects you?	16.7	14.8	22.2	37
e) does your teamleader pressure you to submit suggestions?	0	13	72.2	9.3
f) does your teamleader listen to your ideas about making the job easier and safer?	9.3	18.5	38.9	25.9
g) does your teamleader put pressure on you to do your job?	14.8	16.7	16.7	40.7
h) does your teamleader think more like management than one of you?	42.6	22.2	16.7	11.1

The answers to these questions demonstrate that while most team-members get along well with their teamleaders, they did not view them as specially helpful with their jobs. Equally teamleaders do not seem to pressure their members for suggestions, nor do they put pressure on team-members to do their jobs better. The result from this survey (appendix C) demonstrates that workers more often than not identify teamleaders with management (42.6 %); i.e. team-members view teamleaders as management's teamleaders. The results indicate also that there is a gulf between teamleaders and team-members. Question (13) which asked about the relationship among team-members themselves was: *How often has there been serious disagreements between members of your team?* 61.1 % said either *not much* or *never*. It seems that while team-members express their problems to teamleaders team-members operate more closely together. While internal conflicts within the teams are low, the relationship between teamleader and team-members is more open to conflict. Again access to teamleaders is restricted a) if they are on the line or b) the workers do not attend meetings. In addition, questions were also asked about their general attitude to team-work:

Table 4.2.: Team-Members and Teamwork

Question (15):	agree	disagree
a) Helps me do my job better.	30.2 %	69.8 %
b) Gives me a chance to get to know people.	49.1 %	50.9 %
c) Is a waste of time.	36.0 %	64.0 %
d) Gives me a chance to raise my concerns.	32.1 %	67.9 %
e) Helps me feel I'm part of Vauxhall.	16.3 %	83.7 %
f) Is a way to get us to work harder.	83.7 %	16.3 %
g) Helps me see how my job fits in the overall scheme.	25.5 %	74.5 %
h) Gets us all pressuring one another.	64.0 %	36.0 %
i) Gives me a say over how my job is done.	23.5 %	76.7 %
j) Helps Vauxhall but not me.	79.6 %	20.4 %
k) Allows team-members to act together to express complaints.	50.0 %	50.0 %



A clear picture emerges from this survey of dissatisfaction with the implementation of teamwork. 79.6 % of workers clearly identify the purpose of the introduction of teamwork as suiting management before their own interests; 64 % see it as used by management to get workers pressuring other workers; 76.7 % feel they have no greater say or control through team structures; 83.7 % do not identify in any way with the company and 64 % see the whole project as a waste of time in terms of their own interests. Where teamwork however seems to suit workers more is in its socialising aspect although it is also seen positively as a way of marshalling and expressing complaints. To conclude, even though there are some positive aspects for the workforce, the negative aspects are more strongly expressed.

#### 4.1.4. Teamwork and Teamleaders

A significant section of the teamwork agreement regulates teamleaders' role because of their influence over the internal structure of the team and their position in the internal hierarchy. Even though teamleaders were instituted in 1992, a similar position in the plant existed for many years. Therefore an extra *layer* between workers and supervisors was nothing new at Vauxhall. As early as 1941, *charge-hands* were appointed by management; they received a pay increase of 26 pence more than the average wage in 1992. A *charge-hand* was, then, an assistant supervisor or a *deputy supervisor* who worked between supervisors and workers. Their task was mainly tool distribution and maintenance, but on occasions *charge-hands* also stood in for absentees. Similarly, *charge-hands* also existed at IBC because by the time *charge-hands* were introduced both plants had a similar internal structure. Although IBC and Vauxhall are located adjacent to one another, today their IR differs widely as Vauxhall is solely GM managed while IBC has a Japanese-British management. At the IBC plant "the new teamleader's role continues many of the functions performed by group-leaders (*charge-hands*) in the old company" (IBC 1988:2). In comparison to the old *charge-hands*, new teamleaders at IBC have increased authority. Like the *charge-*

*hand*/teamleader relationship at IBC, "there have been expectations that the former group leader would be the future teamleader" (interview: Hart 1993) at Vauxhall.

Even though these expectations existed, new teamleaders were "appointed by the company on the basis of agreed published criteria with equal opportunity for all employees" (Vauxhall 1990:16). For management, the appointment of the teamleader was a necessity because teamwork began with the teamleaders role which was even more important than the formation of the teams themselves. Approximately 1100 employees applied, i.e. 25 % of the total workforce. All applicants were interviewed (May 1992) and selected candidates were subsequently tested in mathematics, english, and communication skills. Vauxhall's teamwork-manager Eglington (1992) did not want the supervisors to nominate future teamleaders, because he argued of the fear of nepotism. Management also felt that the selection process should remain independent to increase the level of objectivity. Out of the 1100 candidates, 403 teamleader were chosen by the company. All 403 teamleaders were trained. Significantly of these 403 teamleaders 80 % were former *charge-hands*.

Vauxhall did not want teamleaders to be elected by teams, because it feared that if stewards were voted in it would increase their power. Although management knew that NUMMI's teamleaders were elected, Vauxhall followed the Ellesmere Port model and appointed them. Vauxhall's QNPS representative Hart (1993) labelled NUMMI as an *ideal world*, where "the teamleader could be elected and does not need to be appointed". Vauxhall's management stated that it would opt for an appointment system for four main reasons: a) a fear of increasing the number of stewards, b) a policy of appointing former *charge-hands* as teamleaders, c) the difficulty of introducing teamwork without creating teams, d) the preference by the unions for appointment as opposed to elections.

With the introduction of teamleaders the areas covered by one supervisor became wider. Vauxhall initiated the following number of teamleaders:

Table 4.3.: The Vauxhall Plant

Plant-Number	Name	Number of teamleaders
LA 01	Body Shop	60
LA 02	Paint Shop	46
LA 03	Final Assembly	78
LA 04	Soft Trim Shop	44
LA 05	Hard Trim Shop	134
Total (1992)	All shops	363

By 1994 the number of teamleaders had reached its final level of 543, and their distribution between different parts of the plant remained unchanged. All 543 teamleaders "will be within the same occupational classification as their team-members but will receive a teamleader supplement, which on appointment will be 6 % of their basic rates followed by a further 3 % upon satisfactory completion of a qualifying period of six months" (Vauxhall 1992:67). In concrete terms this amounted to approximately £ 28 per week. Even though the wage system did not open a new level of payment for teamleaders, they received an extra payment on top of their normal pay; this wage increase acted as an incentive for people to become teamleaders. Although a 9 % pay rise was not the only incentive to become a teamleader, it was enough to keep the resignation rate below 2 % in 1994. The other reason for this low rate of resignation was that 80 % of teamleaders were former *charge-hands*. Since teamwork was not fully installed during the first year, the role of the new teamleaders differed only slightly from the role of the old *charge-hand*.

The change from *charge-hand* to teamleader did not alter their position within the hierarchy, because teamleaders like *charge-hands* have always been positioned between team-members and supervisors. On the other hand, teamleaders also have to function in what could be called a *triangle*: a) the rank and file, b) supervisors and c) stewards. Within such a *triangle*, the most important issue, i.e. the power to discipline remained firmly in the hand of the supervisor. The agreement specifies that formal disciplinary action will always be taken by the supervisor. Even though the agreement was clear on the issue of disciplinary action and who could take it, alterations that were discussed did, during the first year of teamwork, demonstrate that the system was not static and showed some flexibility on this point.

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The first attempt by management to alter the role of the teamleader was carried out within one year of its introduction. In February 1993, management issued a paper on the teamleader's roles which increased the teamleader's responsibilities. After the opposition of TGWU's convenor John Jack, the paper was withdrawn because its contents exceeded the regulations of the original teamwork agreement. For example, in contrast to the old agreement, the new regulation would have allowed the teamleader to publish an absentee list on team notice boards. According to the original agreement, the teamleader role was merely to "accommodate absent employees" (Vauxhall 1922:22). Furthermore, the paper would have given teamleaders the power to "liaise with the supervisor for the purpose of assessing team-members performance". The original agreement did not contain such a provision. Consequently, an attempt by the company to break the agreement was stopped by the unions.

#### 4.1.5. Conclusions

At the beginning of the 1990s motivated by increased competition and recession, Vauxhall saw the opportunity to increase productivity and profit and to create a better manufacturing system. Teamwork was considered to have a significant advantage over the old production models. IBC's teamwork was successful in the late '80s when Japanese management took partial control and improved their methods. Besides IBC, Ellesmere Port had also introduced teamwork. Ellesmere's teamwork was a success and influenced Luton's willingness to adapt teamwork.

During the process of the introduction of teamwork, GME did not directly interfere at Vauxhall, apart from giving guidelines and advice to local management. Differences in national contexts or even between plants were accepted by GME. However, GME insisted on the introduction of QNPS and teamwork in all European operations in the early 90s. Teamwork models differ between countries and even between GM plants

inside the same country. Teamwork also incorporated the issue of plant based industrial democracy, i.e. representation in the form of stewards in Vauxhall's agreement includes the unions and employee representatives as an integral part of the representative system. Besides this it also requires employee involvement.

While teamwork demanded more from team-members and teamleaders, it did not change traditional job classifications. Nevertheless, some of these factors were affected by the introduction of teamwork at the door-section. Vauxhall's agreement recognised the unions as *an integral part* of the representative process and yet stewards were excluded from the planning stage at the door-section. The reduction of the workforce was accomplished through a suggestion scheme which again stewards could not influence or oppose particularly as this decision was not a management one but a team or worker led decision.

Another example demonstrates the conflict that can occur between teamleaders and team-members. Although greater productivity was achieved through the introduction of teamwork on the door-section, management decided not to use this *surplus time* for team-meetings. Team-members were not able to change their teamleader because all team-meetings are attended by teamleaders who draw up an agenda and chair the meeting. As a result of this, a team is unable to meet in work without a teamleader being present and in control of the agenda. The teamleader is in some cases regarded as an external representative with a management controlled function which has surveillance control functions. A further lack of democracy is that teams cannot remove the teamleader because s/he is appointed by the company.

Since team-members cannot change teamleaders, management is able to constantly monitor and control teams. As a consequence, teamleaders are the crucial representative figures because s/he sets the agenda and has the power to co-opt *external* people, for example stewards. Given the teamleaders' position in their role *over and above* a team, team-members often do not see them as necessary. Half of the team-members

rejected their role; *We do not need them*; 85 % said they did not want to be teamleaders because they feared they would be identified with management puppets. Despite management's and union's decision to appoint teamleaders most workers would prefer to elect them and 68.5 % of the workforce think the current system of selection of teamleaders is unfair. Team-members do not only reject the appointment of teamleaders, the results of the survey clearly express the conflict between teamleaders and teams. Team-members tend to disregard the whole team system when the relation between team-members and teamleaders is bad. In short, Vauxhall's team-concept indicates problems not only between teamleaders and team-members, but for the whole concept of teamwork.

The door-section was considered to be the pilot model to test the effectiveness of teamwork which was then to be transferred to the whole plant. Teamleaders have much in common with their predecessors, the *charge-hands*. Because of the process of selecting teamleaders; 80 % of the new teamleaders were in fact former *charge-hands*. Vauxhall's management strategy in appointing teamleaders was to avoid a further growth in the number of stewards who were seen as hostile representatives of the workforce in comparison to teamleaders who were seen to function much more effectively and in favour of the company's industrial goals.

**Chapter**

**4.2.**

**Teamwork  
at Opel**



## 4.2. Teamwork at Opel

In 1925, the assembly line at Opel was one of the first assembly line factories in Germany (Gottschall 1992:56). According to Door-Module manager Vogel (1993), production was partly organised in cells between 1986 and 1994, but all other parts of the plant were constructed around the assembly line. One of the reasons for introducing teamwork was the co-called *Kaizen* or KVP. Works council-member Seib (1993) at final assembly regards *Kaizen* as an option which is used to improve the "quality of working life". Since management uses KVP as a measure for the success of teamwork, supervisors are forced to work according to its guidelines.

Since GM-Aspern was one of the pilot scheme for teamwork, Opel's works council and management carefully watched the development of the production teams at Aspern during the eighties. In the nineties on the other hand the focus shifted towards GM-Eisenach. In contrast to Opel's team-concept which is examined in this study; the Eisenach teams had to present at least three suggestions per month to avoid wage reductions. According to Opel-Bochum's works council-member Schaumberg (1993), GM's management demands team-meetings to be scheduled off work time at Eisenach. Increasingly KVPs are forced on teams as a measurement of success. To highlight the importance of KVPs and their link to an increase in productivity, "Walter Schlotfeld, the personnel director at Rüsselsheim expects an increase in productivity through the introduction of teamwork" (Main Spitze 11.4.91) and through the use of KVPs. Management quite openly expects an increase in productivity from teamwork and an improvement in work standards.

As Gulowsen shows (chapter 2.1.1.1), it is possible that teams are able to autonomously redistribute their work to a high degree. However, at Opel when teams were allowed to redesign their own work to increase efficiency, supervisors often used this information to cut the team's membership and increase the work load of individual team-members. Closely linked to redistributing work was the rotation of team-

members, which enabled team-members to do their neighbour's job (Wolf 1991:30). This was fostered by management and works council in order not only to distribute the work load within teams, but also because the works council argued that it was a step towards the humanisation of work; workers would no longer be inhumanely and monotonously performing one assembly line function.

Productivity increases, rotation of jobs, internal distribution of work and KVPs are all indicators that allowed Opel's management to evaluate the teamwork experiment and to measure its successful implementation for the company. The QNPS which include teamwork, were geared to approach a broad-scale transformation to a second industrial revolution (Müller 1992:198). Original plans for teamwork started with 3,000 workers in 1992 but were scheduled to affect all employees by 1993; all production work would then take place in teams. To achieve this goal, management and the works council agreed to introduce a "committee on the introduction of teamwork" (*Lenkungsausschuß Gruppenarbeit*). By 1993, production workers were placed in teams on the *Omega* and *Vectra/Calibra* line. During a meeting of the *Lenkungsausschuß Gruppenarbeit* (25. January 1993), reports which were presented by Opel's warehouse demonstrated resistance by supervisors to the introduction of teamwork. According to works council-member Franz (1993), "supervisors are the key to the success of teamwork, hence the works council demanded a better training for them". It was agreed that the economic recession in Germany, i.e. particularly the falling demands for cars, endangered teamwork. On the other hand, the "lay-offs in weekly work time could be used to train teamspeakers and supervisors". Supervisors and highly skilled workers were the focus point for the introduction of teamwork. However teamwork included a mixing of production and *quality control*; teams at the final assembly line were established without merging production and quality; at final assembly there were 29 teams in production and four teams in quality control. In other words, the goal of merging quality control with production was not reached in 1993, but was finally accomplished in 1995.

The teamwork which started in the early 1990s had made considerable progress by the mid-1990s compared to other motor-car producers in Germany. Although important issues such as KVPs, rotation, and work distribution were still in an introductory phase, Opel managed to introduce teamwork as a plant wide concept of organising production workers on the assembly line. A small questionnaire-survey (appendix B) was conducted in final assembly. In answer to the central question (12): *How much do you like being a member of your team?* 24 % answered *very much*, 58 % *somewhat*, 12 % *not much*, and 6 % *not at all*. As final assembly was the first area in which teamwork was introduced team-members in the majority seemed to favour teamwork, even after having worked for over a year in teams. More than 80 % either enjoyed working in a team or at least liked it to some extent. On the basis of this results workers tended to accept the introduction of teamwork in final assembly.

### 4.2.1. The Introduction of Teamwork

With the *crisis* of Fordism in the 1970s, attempts were made to ease its negative effects by trying to implement teamwork. However, "the teamwork project in the 70's failed because of the resistance of management, union and the works councils" (Endres 1993:635). Management, unions and the works council rejected teamwork; management saw it as a loss of control and unions/works council feared the impact of teamspeakers on representation.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, these views changed considerably not only within management, but also within unions and the works councils. In the 1980s and 1990s, competition from Japanese producers forced GM to look at its production concepts in the USA and in Europe. The 1980s also proved to be less favourable for unions in Germany, so that when at the end of 1988 Opel's management approached the works council about teamwork the works council agreed under the provision of a new wages structure. The works council and management agreed on setting up a committee to

change the wage structure and also to introduce teamwork. The committee worked on a draft for an agreement between the end of 1989 and mid 1991. This negotiation resulted in the reduction of wages grades (42 to 10) and the introduction of teamwork. GM began the introduction of teamwork without having a structured plan and schedule; each GM plant, it was decided, should adjust teamwork according to the structure of its existing IR and production system. In contrast to green field sites like CAMI or Eisenach where it was possible to create new structures, teamwork, at a brown field site, had to fit into an existing structure.

Since introducing teamwork into an existing brown-field site demanded more time and a different approach, Opel estimated in 1991 the time needed was two to three years as an introductory period. In 1993, management declared that: "Although teamwork started with 12 teams in June 1990, it will take more than five years until teamwork will be fully developed" (interview: Hildman 1993). Teamwork was first introduced in final assembly (interview: Schischke 1993).

Before the introduction of teamwork in 1990, an external consultant (IFAO) was hired by Opel's management. IFAO assisted and gave advice to management and to some degree to the works council during this period. Already in 1990, IFAO were distributing leaflets on management's behalf about the advantages of teamwork and was using attitudinal surveys in some parts of the plant to assess employees receptivity to this change.

In a survey at Opel where question (11) about being a member of a team was asked: *How much do you like the idea of working as part of a team?* 23.5 % said *very much*, 51.0 % *somewhat*, 15.7 % *not much*, and 7.8 % *not at all*. These findings seemed to support management's impression, that the bulk of the workers, i.e. almost 75 % would support teamwork. IFAO was used by management to provide advice and to collect appropriate data to enable management to handle all the issues connected with a successful introduction of the system.

Teamwork is not just one element of QNPS, but is regarded as an essential aspect, because teams after all is at the forefront of production. Under this new system, teams, would have between eight to fifteen workers elected *group-speakers* (Network 1992:44). Even though teams elected their teamspeakers, QNPS aimed to introduce a *customer-relationships*. A team, for example which installs a gear-box into a car is the *customer* of a team that builds the gear-box. Under QNPS and the *customer-supplier-relation*, Opel's management tried to introduce competition between the different sections of production and different production teams. This *customer-supplier-relationships* model between teams is not yet fully implemented, but is scheduled to be implemented once teamwork is fully operating. Management needed to set up fully functioning teams before they were able to fully introduce the *customer-supplier-relationships* model.

GM's Opel management was very clear on the objectives of teamwork. To inform their employees concerning the introduction of QNPS, Opel arranged five company-wide meetings with 5,000 workers attending in August and September 1991, 14,000 workers present at the Bochum plant-meeting in August 1991, and 45 training classes for teamwork were organised for 5,800 workers at the Kaiserslautern plant in 1991 and 1992 (Network 1992:3). In large workshops workers met to receive information about teamwork. To gain workers acceptance and support for teamwork, workers at all Opel operations were given continuous information by management at an early stage; information about teamwork was given *after* the works council had agreed to implement teamwork in all GM plants. Before the company agreement (Betriebsvereinbarung, BV) with number 179 (BV 179) was signed, works council-members agreed to install *project teams* for the introduction of teamwork at Opel's research and development department. After this process of consultation with the works council, teamwork commenced with six teams. The experience gained from the project teams was then used in the draft of BV 179. At the *components shop* teamwork started in 1990 prior to BV 179 with works council's approval. Pilot schemes were launched starting with the *gear-box* production line because the *compo-*

*nents shop* was not directly part of the production flow. Team-meetings were held approximately once a week, although in 1992 the number of team-meetings fell because of labour shortages. According to works council-member Wink (1993) and Sigges (1993), the introduction of teamwork at the *component's shop* was too fast and done without consulting supervisors and without appropriate training for team-speakers. Works council-member Wink's concern reflects the more general concern about the problems that occurred during the introduction of teamwork at the *components shop*. Based on feedback to this early experiment, Opel reached an agreement with the works council to introduce teamwork at the company's domestic plants, (IRS/519 1992:3) in April 1991. Because of the German system of IR, the works council enjoyed considerable co-determination power over personnel affairs (Markovits 1986) therefore management was forced to seek works council's approval for any change in personnel relations. On the basis of the *works constitution* (BetrVG), Opel's management invited the works council for a discussion on teamwork. In addition to the pilot-studies, a company agreement between management and the works council was reached including provisions for team-members and team-speakers (Frackmann 1993:65). Even before the agreement was officially signed, a steering committee (*Lenkungsausschuss*) had been set up to implement the agreement (Thönnies 1993:188). The steering committee met fortnightly, monitored and discussed developments, problems, and any necessary changes to teamwork.

### 4.2.2. The Teamwork Agreement

By the mid-1970s workers were increasingly disillusioned with Opel's old and conservative works council and voted for a more *progressive* works council. Since this *progressive* works council was elected in spring 1975, Opel has signed more than 250 BVs, demonstrating the importance of documented agreement through institutionalised means, in this system. Given the importance of teamwork, it was then regulated

through a legally binding contract between management and the works council, i.e. a *company agreement (Betriebsvereinbarung, BV)*.

On the 4th of April 1991, Opel's management and the works council reached an agreement on teamwork. The agreement (no. 179) applied to all German GM operations, (Rüsselsheim, Bochum, and Kaiserslautern, and Dudenhofen), but not to the Opel-Eisenach GmbH factory, which is a separate company not linked to Opel (West). Management's reason for BV 179 was to meet the *challenge of competition*. The works council's interest was to *increase workers individual self-development within the frame of production*. To be able to achieve both goals, they agreed to *introduce teamwork*. Management saw one aim of teamwork of *Kaizen* as an increase in flexibility and motivation. To ease the effect on workers, the works council demanded that if *productivity increases and team sizes are reduced team-members who are removed from teams have to be employed at a better or similar position within the company* (BV 1991:2), thus introducing a strong element of workers' protection. According to Opel's management, team size or team areas are to be organised in a way that each team can *accomplish its production tasks without shifting workers between different teams on a short-time basis*. Teams should be stable in size and location. According to BV 179, teams have the following responsibilities (BV 1991:3):

- 
- distribution of work among its members, regulation of rest time, team-meetings, health and safety improvements, job rotation, holiday planning,
  - increase of motivation and satisfaction ,
  - production tasks and quality demands have to be met,
  - adaptation of production variations,
  - meet cost requirements of production,
  - production and tool efficiency compensated by minor maintenance and machine fitting,
  - *Kaizen* (continuous improvement) for production,
  - developing standardised work charts,
  - installation of improved tools or production methods within the working area of the team
  - ensure the information flows within the team to the supervisor,
  - training of new team-members,
  - integration of disabled workers,
  - maintaining a clean and tidy work area,
  - support creativity, innovations and independence of team-members,
  - participation on work tasks, conditions, production organisation, and working environment\*.
- 

To avoid disadvantages for workers as a result of accepting teamwork, the works council included a provision that if suggestions result in personnel alterations, they *need to be approved by the works council* (BV 1991:4). The BV also negotiated pro-

visions stopping team-members and teamspeakers from being subject to personnel assessment methods like the Japanese *Satei* (Endo 1994) which could be used to threaten workers. According to BV 179 (1991:4), "teams can neither test or examine team-members, nor are job evaluation and efficiency measures the responsibilities of the team".

Team-meetings, as set up by management, are seen as work related discussions for *up to one hour* and should be *on a weekly basis*. Teamspeakers set up meetings to discuss production; these are held in normal working hours. It was agreed that *off-work* time meetings were paid as overtime. Teams have the freedom to determine their own agenda and can consult all necessary specialists, supervisors, works council-members, etc. They can also introduce special issues in meetings (BV 1991:4), but access to team-meetings for any outsider is very restricted because they are only allowed to participate if co-opted. However, the decision who to invite must be made by the team and not by the teamspeaker alone.

The wages structure of team-members, as set up in BV 180, is different according to their working tasks (BV 1991:4). With teamwork, the number of wage grades were reduced from 42 grades to 10. However, one way to increase an individual wage was to move from one wage grade to another; this was linked to skill and work tasks and could be achieved by acquiring additional skills through rotation. In short, although wages grades were reduced, with teamwork, workers could move to a higher grade more easily. The team cannot *hinder any member from self improvement* (BV 1991:4); this gave team-members the option to rotate, resulting in the acquisition of additional skills, which then enabled team-members to move to a higher wage grade. As a consequence of this agreement, works council was able to ensure additional wage claims for its members. GM's management was aware of this implication but accepted it.



## Teamspeaker

Management and works council agreed at an early stage that *teamspeakers* should not be called *teamleaders* to avoid the German word *Führer* or *Gruppenführer*. Even more important, both sides wanted to ensure a democratic election and a strong link between the team and teamspeaker. While teams were headed by either a **management-appointed leader** or by a team **elected speaker**, *teamspeakers* represented team-members inside and outside of teams and acted on behalf of the team. They had no disciplinary or supervisory powers, Opel's teamspeakers were seen as mediators, communicators and moderators.

BV 179 demands *secret elections (majority voting)* for a teamspeaker. These elections were to be held among team-members on a six monthly (first election) basis and later on an annual basis. The usual case in *elections* were that teams decide who the teamspeaker will be before the election. Voting is often done by a *show of hands*. Prior to the election, teams were informed about teamspeakers' duties, rights and tasks. Teamspeakers' positions are not a lifetime position because a term can end at any time through majority voting in a secret ballot. Deputy teamspeakers are elected who deputise for a teamspeaker during his absences; BV 179 also included a small financial incentive for the teamspeaker; 30 pc/hour. Teamspeakers and team-members were seen as performing different functions. Teamspeakers had the following responsibilities: team motivating, moderating at team-meetings, consulting on information flow, reaching team goals, and supporting supervisors; s/he is provided with the necessary time for her/his duties. The crucial factor of disciplinary action is also regulated in BV 179, which states, that *teamspeakers do not have the authority to discipline people* (Wolf 1991:30), this remains firmly in the hand of supervisors.

Even though it is not specifically addressed in the agreement, there is a link between supervisors and teamwork; these changes in teamwork meant that the work of *supervisors* changed as well. Since German supervisors' function has traditionally been a production related role, and some of these functions were now delegated to teams,

the *Meister's* (supervisory) function shifted more towards a social function, i.e. a working together with teams, supporting teams to ensure the accomplishment of their tasks, developing communication and co-ordination among teams and sections, assisting the problem-solving processes, supporting the skill-development of team-members and the assignment of personnel to production tasks. Supervisors are also responsible for exchanging team-members among teams, i.e. they fulfilled their traditional role as technical advisors. As teamwork moved some of these supervisory functions to teams, training was seen as important. Teamspeakers, deputy teamspeakers, and supervisors received additional communications training; together with the works council, management developed training methods to create new qualifications; the *works council had the power to approve such training schemes* which were then designed and carried out by management.

Management and works council altered the role of the teamspeaker in spring 1994. As with the first amendment to BV 179, an additional amendment (BV-AB 1994) regulated the selection, nomination, assessment, training and removal of teamspeakers. In contrast to the previous regulation, teamspeakers, for example, must be able to speak German. Previous experience throughout the initial period showed that teamspeakers often lacked the necessary communication skills to moderate meetings, discuss and negotiate with supervisors, etc. GM's management demanded a re-assessment of the teamspeaker's role. Works council agreed to an alteration concerning the language requirement which of course excluded many non-German speakers from applying for the teamspeaker role. The works council was not able to push management to initiate more and better training courses, even in language skills, but in fact accepted the request to exclude certain workers from a potential application. In contrast to previous regulations, a potential candidate must also be able to perform the highest level of flexibility within a team. The changes then were linked to the level of skills or the level of operations s/he is able to carry out. Another significant modification of BV 179 was that, not only a team can nominate a candidate for teamspeaker, but also supervisors; this clause was previously strongly resisted by works council-members, and it

was one which introduced a much less democratic system. This change marked a step backwards to the old IR: to the worker-supervisor system. After a candidate for teamspeaker is nominated, an assessment is used by management to appraise the teamspeakers qualifications with regard to problem-solving, communication, moderation, logical thinking, and mathematics.

To conclude management not only excluded parts of the workforce from application, it also failed to provide the necessary training for potential teamspeakers e.g. language. In addition, management demanded of teamspeakers a high level of skills, and because of the consequent introduction of assessment criteria management changed from a more democratic model (team elects) to a more authoritarian model (management assessment and team elects). In contrast, elections of teamspeakers by teams showed that team-members elect teamspeakers on the basis of production and operational skills. Because of these modifications to the old agreement, management had significantly narrowed the range of potential applicants and made the whole system less democratic.

### Teamwork and Participation

BV 179 includes explicit provisions to address the relationship between teamwork and the works council:

To ensure the works council's ability of co-determination, it has to be informed about planned measures within a reasonable period of time. The rights of the works council are based on collective and company agreements, laws, and other regulations remains untouched.

Since the power of the works council is based on the works constitution and a BV can neither by-pass nor ignore the works constitution, the works council needed to be part of any new form of representation that teamwork involved. As the role of the new teams were representative and entered the arena of representation assigned to the works council by law, the works councils had to be informed about any changes and *planned measures* on the issue of teamwork. The introduction of teamwork, then, became an issue both for management and the works council, any local adjustments

within Rüsselsheim, Bochum, or Kaiserslautern needed to be agreed with the works council. To ensure their constant input and participation a joint committee of equal numbers of works council-members and management was installed to deal with all necessary negotiations concerning this agreement.

With BV 179, all previous agreements (the Bochum agreement of 22nd December 1988 and the Kaiserslautern agreement of 18th September 1989) were discontinued. With BV 179 an amendment was reached distributing the rank and file into non-mixed teams. In contrast to *lean production* in modern plants, Opel still kept maintenance and production teams separate from each other. As Lane put it, "the old division between production and skilled trades departments has not been abolished" (Lane 1988:149).

### 4.2.3. Teamwork in Practice

Teamwork in the 1990s is according to workplace representative Casu (1992,1993) not primarily intended to overcome traditional work practices and job demarcations; it is the consequence of an attempt by management to move into the direction of lean production under market pressure. Skilled and unskilled workers are still separated from each other; the relatively small degree of training concentrates largely on communication and presentation skills. Any attempt to upgrade skills for previously unskilled workers cannot be found at Opel. Even though teams are not mixed, the team size, between 8 and 15 (13,3 on average), remains stable. In this survey (appendix C and D), 80.4 % said *no* to the question (4): *Has the number of people on your team changed since your last meeting?* Only 17.6 % answered *Yes*.

As teamwork was introduced at Opel, jobs were increasingly broadly defined and their boundaries became more fluid; teams had the responsibility of distributing work among team-members. However, in many cases the *Meister* still distributed work

within teams, according to works council-member Franz (1993a). Despite the claim of the agreement to protect less capable or older team-members, increasingly team-members were defined as incapable and pushed out of existing teams by their fellow team-members. One of the elements in the agreement to which the works council paid special interest was the integration of disabled workers. A works council-member represented the disabled workers and was occupied allocating disabled workers around the plant as these workers enjoyed special protection by law from dismissal. Moved to non-assembly line jobs however the introduction of teamwork was to have major affects on the security of these workers.

Team-members were instructed at Opel to hold meetings at least once a week for *up to one hour per week*. The agreement did not mention whether attendance should be voluntary or compulsory. However, to the question (8): *Are you required to attend team-meetings?* 55 % said yes and 45 % no. More crucial was the team-members' attendance; to the question (9) *do you always attend* 74.5 % said yes. 23.5 % said no. Even though BV 179 does not require attendance at team-meetings, half of the team-members are requested to attend, and almost 75 % attend team-meetings all the time.

However, at Opel, in reality, such team-meetings are held much less than once a week and often do not even occur on a monthly basis. In January 1993, team-meetings were often cancelled on the production line for the *Omega*-car because of insufficient replacement workers. Some of the team-members on the Omega B-shift reported that meetings were only held every six months. Here, some meetings were organised off work time, but voluntary attendance was around 50 %. During a meeting of the *Lenkungsausschuß*, the personnel manager Schischke (1993) reported that there were not enough meetings and because of different languages spoken on the assembly line, communication between team-members was a real problem. Since team-meetings are often denied by supervisors, works councils demanded the instalment of a *stand in team* or a so-called *fire brigade* to take over a team's task when necessary. Although this brigade was installed for a while in some areas it was subsequently abolished.

Workers were also asked (question: 11) about the idea of working in a team (How much do you like the idea of working as part of a team?) 23.5 % of Opel's workers said *very much*, most workers said *somewhat* (51 %) and only around 20 % said either *not much* (15.7 %) or *not at all* (7.8 %). The results of the question (12): how much do you like being a member of your team? are similar. 24 % of the workers said *very much*, 58 % said *somewhat*, 12 % said *not much* and only 6 % said *not at all*. In short, over 70 % of Opel's workers like the idea of working in a team or being a member of a team *very much* or *somewhat*, while only 20 % like the idea *not much* or *not at all*.

Originally management was afraid that meetings would be used by works councils and workplace representatives to discuss union issues. However, discussions at meetings have ranged from rotation, to absenteeism, to flexibility, material handling, production flow or holiday planning. When the workforce was asked the question (10): *Is there a pressing issue that your team is dealing with now?* 51.0 % said *yes, there is* and 45.1 % answered *no, there isn't* (no response: 7.8 %). It seems as if almost half of the team-members do not think there is a *pressing issue* which needs to be discussed in meetings. Issues discussed in meetings can also lead to conflict, thus the question (13) was asked: *How often have there been serious disagreements between members of your team?* 8.2 % answered *all the time*, 58 % answered *often*, 12 % said *once in a while* and only 6 % said *never*.

In terms of Opel's agreement, job rotation seemed to be a measure which not only increases flexibility, but also enables team-members to share the burden of harder jobs within teams by rotating jobs. However, rotation has also had negative side effects; every worker was expected to function on each job of the team's operation. However, team-members who were not able to keep up in specific jobs were often asked to leave the team. This particularly affected the female, disabled and older members of teams. Although holiday planning was allocated to the teams, the main allocation of

holidays is done by management. Opel closes for three weeks during the summer and during the Christmas holidays; these holidays again are fixed by management. Even though in both cases the works council participates in the decision, teams themselves have no input. However, the remaining holidays can be distributed by teams and this seems can work in favour of team-members.

Even though the Opel agreement states that production tasks and quality demands have to be met, monitoring functions remain the supervisors' responsibility. The same applied to the cost efficient design of production; this is still the responsibility of supervisors. Since teamspeakers and team-members are not sufficiently trained, functions like giving assistance to production-engineering remains part of the supervisory role. Supervisors are also still in charge of maintenance, production, and tool maintenance and machine fitting; there tasks are not handed over to teams because of their lack of training. Continuous improvement suggestions (KVP) have a top-down character; middle-management imposes KVPs on teams and tries to convince the top-management that teamwork functions well.

The clause which demands the maintenance of clean and tidy work areas has already created friction between teams; one team on A-shift at *final assembly* made a suggestion to the management that a disabled cleaner should not be replaced after he retired. The team's suggestion or KVP was accepted and the worker was not replaced, which meant not only that a disabled worker did not get a job, but that the team on B-shift had to clean their working area without participating in either the decision, or in the reward which management paid to the team on A-shift. Such friction happens increasingly because workers in certain sections are broken up into teams, and teams in different shifts are encouraged to submit KVPs to gain financial rewards. While there suggestions do not exclusively affect their own "lean management" - they can affect other teams as well.

The sort of autonomy of teams established by management at Opel seems to lead to the danger of having workers act against each other and against traditional concepts of worker's organisations. Many teams also seem to believe they have significant levels of autonomy to make their own decisions. Often teams in manufacturing are actually not *autonomous* but are *semi-autonomous*. On Gulowsen's scale (chapter 2.1.1.1.) Opel's teams reach an average level of autonomy (appendix N). The exception to this level of autonomy is item 7 (methods of production), because it is almost completely defined by the assembly line. Opel seems to give its teams a greater autonomy in the area of methods of production, but the degree of autonomy is determined narrowly because of the mode of Fordist and Taylorist production. In general, Opel's teams seem to reflect the level of autonomy of other car plants (appendix N).

In a survey on the attitude of team-members to teamspeakers 66.7 % of the team-members at Opel's final assembly (appendix D) responded favourably to question (17): *Do you think there should be teamspeaker?* Only approximately 20 % said there should be no teamspeaker (no response: 11.8 %). According to the survey, speakers seemed to be widely accepted by team-members. 60.8 % of the team-members, however, said *no* to question (18): *Would you like to become a teamspeaker?* Only 23.5 % of the team-members wanted to be teamspeakers (no response: 15.7 %). One reason for the rejection of this position is that their role is seen as that of a middle-man between management (supervisors) and workers (team-members). The choice of becoming such a link between workers and management is not attractive, it seems, given the marginal pay increase of a few pence per hour. In contrast to Eisenach and Toyota, the position of teamleader at Opel is not a step upward in a clear career structure. At Toyota and Eisenach, a teamleader's position is not only a move away from the constraints of the assembly line, it is also a move in the direction of becoming a supervisor (Toyota) or an area-engineer (Eisenach). To become a supervisor or *Meister* at Opel, however, an additional training in a *Meister-Schule* is required. Without a *Meister-Certificate* a teamspeaker cannot graduate up to that level; i.e. to move from



teamspeaker to supervisor without any kind of additional training is almost impossible. Therefore, the incentive of a *career-move* is basically non-existent at Opel. In most cases, pressure is put on team-members to become teamspeakers; i.e. the position generally is not attractive to the workforce.

A further survey question (20) asked workers at Opel: *Do you think that teamspeakers should be rotated?* 52 % said *no* and 36 % said *yes* (no response: 12 %). It seems that most team-members accept the mode of selection, but the majority did not want to rotate the position. Therefore, almost 90 % of team-members agreed with the existing system of election, because 86.3 % said *yes* to the question (21): *Do you think that the current system for selecting teamspeakers is a fair one?* Only 5.9 % said *no* (no response: 7.8 %). Team-members at final assembly agreed with the method of selection; i.e. most teams were satisfied to have been able to find a team-member who was willing to take the position. Nevertheless, about 30 % of all teamspeakers resigned by the end of the first term (1/2 year).

Since the teamspeaker's position is exposed to conflict and difficulties and the *team-teamspeaker* relations are important for teamwork, one of the questions in the survey tried to evaluate team-members' relation to teamspeakers. Team-members were asked to respond to the following set of questions:

Table 4.4.: Teamspeakers and Team-Members at Opel

Question (16):	all the time	often	once in a while	never
a) How often do you get along with your teamspeaker?	32	40	26	2
b) How often does your teamspeaker help you with your job?	22	36	34	8
c) How often does your teamspeaker co-operate with you?	38	34	24	4
d) How often do you get the sense your teamspeaker respects you?	41,7	22,9	16,7	18,8
e) How often does your teamspeaker pressure you to submit suggestions?	2,0	6,1	36,7	55,1
f) How often does your teamspeaker listen to your ideas about making the job easier and safer?	58	20	20	2
g) How often does your teamspeaker put pressure on you to do your job?	4,2	8,3	45,8	41,7
h) How often does your teamspeaker think more like management than one of you?	8,7	21,7	17,4	52,2

72 % of the team-members said they had a good relationship with their speaker either *all the time* or *often*; only 2 % see their relationship as *never* good. It can be assumed, that the relationship of the majority of the team-members to teamspeakers is good perhaps because they are elected and this generates a certain degree of trust. Since

teamspeakers are just one of the workers in the team, an election does not change internal team relations to a significant degree. Half of the team-members, because that teamspeakers *never* think like management. However, there were cases where workers saw this new position as the same as the supervisory role and behaved accordingly. In most teams such a development led to two possible reactions: either a teamspeaker lost the position very soon, or works councils, or workplace representatives, or *Meisters* advised them about the role and the nature of their position. In most cases teamspeakers grasped the nature of their role. Despite the fact, that team-members have a good relationship with them, they are in general not considered to be helpful on production related issues. In contrast to the Eisenach model, where teamleaders received special training, at Opel they did not. In addition, the largest single reason for being elected to the role of teamspeaker was a *knowledge of production*. Workers who do get elected as teamspeakers definitely do not have the power or status and are not seen to have the power of the German *Meister*. For 40 % of the team-members, teamspeakers either helped them only *once in a while* or *never*. The results of the survey showed that workers did not expect teamspeakers to carry out different functions on the assembly line, a task seen as the responsibility of *Meisters*. Opel's management also did not create this position to compete with the supervisory functions of *Meister*. Teamspeakers, in this model, function more as a *first among equals* (Eyer 1993:17). The so-called *football-metaphor* (interview: Eglington 1993) can be applied to Opel's teamspeakers. Both, Opel' management and the works council wanted teamspeakers to be like *captains*, i.e. unlike Toyota, Opel's speakers participate fully on the assembly lines thus maintaining their *captain*-like role.

Teamspeakers at Opel do better on the question of co-operation in work related matters. The answer to question d) in the above table indicates that team-members believe that their teamspeakers respect them. However, almost 20 % of the team-members feel that they are showed no respect at all. The data (question: g) also seems to support team-members' claim that KVP is often introduced from outside; whereas Eisenach forces teams to submit KVPs, Opel's teamspeaker do not pressure team-members

to do their job or to make suggestions. Since their legitimacy and their position depends directly on their relationship to team-members, they are not in a position to put pressure on workers to a significant degree. The results tend to support Kern's (1991) assessment that teams can protect individual workers from the interference of the *Meister*. In contrast to Eisenach, Opel's teams are setup as a cohesive group of workers who are not exposed to management' control via supervisors. Work pressure cannot be transferred onto teams by using teamleaders; this is demonstrated by Parker & Slaughter's study of *Management by Stress* (1988) and *The Dark Side of Teamwork* (1993).

The answers *once in a while* (17,4 %) and *never* (52,2 %) were given to the question to assess workers attitude to their teamspeakers' allegiance. Were they more loyal to management or to team-members? Because of the election system teamspeakers not only depend directly on teams, but also earn their legitimacy from them, therefore, most of the workforce tended to think that they were more like teams ( approximately 70 %) then management (approximately 30 %). Since a career move is basically not an option, they are not *bought* or tempted to behave like new supervisors and additionally they continue to work on the assembly line and experience all its pressures and problems first hand. They may have a title or a different position, but essentially teamspeakers see themselves as workers on the line. With teamwork, this did not change, nor has their status which remains that of blue collar workers.

In a teamspeaker election, at least two candidates need to stand and the election is by majority vote. In some incidences, supervisors tried to influence elections. Nevertheless the predominant qualification for electing a candidate is the level of their performance in production and technical skills (Thönnies 1993:191). In mixed nationality teams, nationality at times created factions particularly when representatives of certain nations were nominated. Pressures on teamspeakers were high because while officially they are allowed one hour off per day for teamwork, this time is often denied by supervisors because of labour shortages.

After elections were conducted at final assembly, supervisors and speakers received a 3 to 4 day external *training*. Although Opel's management wanted works council's participation, the training sessions were held without their participation because works council-members had other priorities or were disinterested. Commenting on union training in relationship to teamwork, works council-member Wink (1993) suggested that instead of the present system of separate and external union training for speakers, training for teamspeakers should be combined and jointly held by management and union. Under such training schemes, the conflict of interests between management and workers would be made clear. However, Wink did not find enough support within the works council assembly (40 members) for his plan, because the majority of the works council preferred the traditional union education approach, i.e. external one week seminars. As of January 1993 approximately 150 teamspeakers and others had participated in IGM's teamwork training. However, there has been widespread criticism of the union (IGM) for not implementing enough union training. Considering that Opel employs 2,000 teamspeakers out of which 150 received some union training only a very small number of teamspeakers were involved in this type of scheme. The training by IGM is intended to train teamspeakers in union affairs, however only 7.5 % of the teamspeakers were able to participate; certainly in 1993 and 1994 the IGM unions did not conduct training schemes on a large enough scale to satisfy training needs.

Management organised its training differently and on a wider scale. The in-plant training approach was based on the *snow ball* system, whereby speakers receive a three to-four day training, which, in theory, is then transferred to the teams during team-meetings. Since the training is very short and line workers usually do not have any recent experience with education, management's education affected team-members only to a very limited extent. According to Opel's teamwork-manager Hildmann (1993), the organiser of such training expected to improve the social climate. Respondents were asked (question: 13): *How often have there been serious disa-*

*greements between members of your team?* 8.2 % said, that *serious disagreements* had occurred *all the time*. 58 % agreed that *serious disagreements* were *often* the case, 12 % said *once in a while*, only 6 % gave the answer *never*. It seems that team-members' responses and the intention of management towards teamwork differ from each other. While management initially hoped to improve the *social climate* on the shopfloor in an attempt to increase job satisfaction, a high proportion of team-members mention *serious disagreements* between team-members. Teamwork, then, did not create a more harmonious working relationship as is commonly believed to be the case.

To evaluate the process of teamwork, management organised monthly feed-back meetings with supervisors. According to Opel's teamwork-manager Hildmann (1993), feed-back from management's training sessions showed roughly the following:

- 40 % of teamspeakers agree with the introduction of teamwork & support the idea,
- 40 % agree to the concept, but have concerns about the success of teamwork, and
- 20 % reject the idea of teamwork.

Rüsselsheim sets itself the goal of convincing at least 50 % of the workforce to support teamwork. Hildmann himself was appointed by Opel's management to supervise the introduction of teamwork; his plan was to gain enough support so that teamwork could be put in place and succeed.

One of the basic characteristics of *world class manufacturing* (Schonberger 1982) in lean production seems to be that "whole layers of management are eliminated" (Storey 1994:2). However, at Opel, an additional layer (teamspeakers) was introduced. Since the layer of teamspeaker overlapped with the layer of supervisor, management needed to alter the latter's role. In contrast to standard teamwork literature and even to

GME's own publication, teamwork did not reduce the levels of management; management, however, did put three to four teams under one supervisor, (25 to 40 workers).

Opel's teamwork-manager Hildmann (1993) claims to have reduced hierarchical structures by replacing the former groupleader (*Kolonnenführer*, i.e. charge-hand). In some areas this has been done merely by re-naming them; the overall hierarchy however remains largely unaffected. Instead of decreasing the hierarchy, the supervisors gained importance. Especially for production issues, the role of the teamspeaker is extremely limited and their training is insufficient. To protect their position, supervisors who regard meetings as unimportant and often cancel them and thwart their whole process. This itself can obstruct the smooth functioning of teamwork. GM-Aspern's solution was the merger of a traditional supervisor and a position above them to create the position of *production co-ordinator* (Murakami 1993b) and Eisenach's solution was the creation of an *area-engineer* (Murakami 1994a). Opel's management "admits, that we did not address the future role of *Meister* during the introduction of teamwork" (Thönnies 1993:194). In a significant number of cases, works council-members demanded from management, on the ground of BV 179 (sec. 2), that team-meetings must take place. Cancellations of meetings by supervisors is seen by the works council as one of the reasons for worker's dissatisfaction with teamwork.

To evaluate the overall attitude of team-members to teamwork, the following questions were asked: Workers were asked to *please read the following list of statements*

and mark wherever you agree or disagree. All things considered, working in a team...

Table 4.5.: Team-Members and Teamwork at Opel

Question (15):	agree	disagree
a) Helps me do my job better.	58.0 %	42.0 %
b) Gives me a chance to get to know people.	44.9 %	55.1 %
c) Is a waste of time.	28.6 %	71.4 %
d) Gives me a chance to raise my concerns.	89.6 %	10.4 %
e) Helps me feel I'm part of Adam Opel.	33.3 %	66.7 %
f) Is a way to get us to work harder.	42.0 %	58.0 %
g) Helps me see how my job fits in the overall scheme.	55.1 %	44.9 %
h) Gets us all pressuring one another.	46.0 %	54.0 %
i) Gives me a say over how my job is done.	62.0 %	38.0 %
j) Helps Opel but not me.	52.1 %	47.9 %
k) Allows team-members to act together to express complaints.	94.0 %	6.0 %

According to these responses team-members seem to be divided over the question of whether or not *teamwork helps workers*. The same applies to the question b) about *meeting people*. Teams are composed of workers from similar working areas who have worked together for years. The *new* team-members therefore knew each other long before teamwork was introduced and teamwork consequently made little difference to the social cohesion of the groups. When introducing teamwork, Opel did not employ new workers and no new team-members were assigned to final assembly, so in the development of teams at Opel social interaction was already established and not facilitated by the existence of teams.

71.4 % of the workers believed that teamwork was not a waste of time, obviously, teamwork has resulted in a positive change for workers on the assembly line and the reality of teamwork has in this sense matched up to management expectations. In contrast to this, the CAMI study (Robertson 1992) reveals, that when management decides to introduce teamwork, workers expectations are high because of the promises made by management (Murakami 1993). Often, as the situation at CAMI demonstrates, workers expectations disappear even after a short period (Berggren 1991). Unlike CAMI, however Opel's workers began to realise the advantages of teamwork after two to three years. After this period of time, the original *drive* towards teamwork was not exhausted and management's original promises were partially fulfilled.

Hence, workers even after a long period of time had lapsed did not see teamwork as a waste of time.

In contrast to the supervisor-worker-system, almost 90 % of team-members view teamwork as an option to raise their concerns. Workers see themselves in this sense as part of a collective force and view teamwork as enabling them to talk to management collectively. In 1993, Opel experienced a small scale un-official and un-documented industrial action which in practice only lasted a few hours. This occurred in an area which had teamwork. Given all the negative effect of teamwork on union representation, Opel's works council-members observed this industrial action with great interest. Works council-members viewed the attendance rate on the strike as an indication of management's success in using teams to influence union representation. The turnout of the strike contradicted the works council's expectation, which was that the collective action of workers would diminish because of the influence of teamwork (interview: Wink 1993a). On the contrary, works council-member Hasenauer (1993) described attendance at the strike as even higher than before teamwork. However, teamwork is still seen by the unions as a device for a participative approach used by management and therefore it has not translated into a higher commitment to the company (corporate identity). Only 1/3rd of workers see themselves as being part of Opel, while for 2/3rds of the workers, teamwork did not help them identify with the company at all.

One of the most critical questions for the success of teamwork has been: *Working harder or working smarter?* (Murakami 1993). 42 % of the workforce believe that teamwork makes work harder. Teamwork also does not seem to help team-members to understand their work in the context of the whole organisation. Only 50 % see teamwork as a means to improve their understanding of their position within Opel. In addition, about 50 % hold the view that teamwork results in workers pressuring each other. Team-members on the other hand did not see their teamspeaker as a source of imposing work on them; they agree that with teamwork competition increases



amongst workers themselves, but it seems that more team-members were afraid that such competition would happen than actually took place (interview: Seib 1993). In the survey 60 % believe that they have some influence on their direct working practice, which is another indicator of a degree of direct involvement with teamwork. Team-members also commonly believe that teamwork brings individual workers together in order to express their collective views. To summarise, team-members view teamwork with mixed feelings. On the one hand they see teamwork as an option which increases direct participation, on the other hand, workers also feel the need to act together to make their opinion recognised. In other words, teamwork has not increased the degree of legitimacy of management, but the results show that workers' have mixed feelings towards the use of teamwork.

## 4.2.4. Conclusions

Since teamwork relates directly to personnel affairs, and works council-member's participative power in the area of personnel matters is quite strong, Opel's management needed an agreement with the works council to implement teamwork and this, in turn, has had a major affect on the type of agreement, particularly in terms of humanising work. The *Lenkungsausschuß* was an important institution in implementing teamwork. While works councils and unions saw the possible advantages of teamwork, management used KVP criterion as a measure of success, i.e. KVPs are one of the elements of QNPS to introduce *lean production* at Opel.

A survey among team-members at final assembly resulted in findings which show that most team-members either enjoy working in a team or at least like it to some extent. Even after about three years of working in teams, workers still seem to prefer the idea of being a member of a team rather than a mere number in a production section. In order to ensure an effective teamwork system, Opel's BV requires that meetings are held *up to one hour on a weekly basis*, but these do not always take place in reality.

Access to team-meetings is also limited because only teams and teamspeakers can invite outsiders (supervisors, engineers, managers, works council-members, etc.) to team-meetings. In other words, since access is restricted, meetings are more or less restrict direct participation by works council-members or workplace representatives (VP) unless s/he is a member of the team. In some rare cases teamspeakers and workplace representatives are identical, but in most cases a team may not have a workplace representative as a team-member.

Teamspeakers are elected in *secret elections (majority voting)* and therefore, Opel's teamwork ranks higher on Gulowsen's scale of autonomy than other plants. An additional amendment (BV-AB 1994), however, now regulates the selection, nomination, assessment, training and removal of teamspeakers and therefore decreases not only the autonomy of the system but also its democracy. Management has successfully implemented regulations narrowing team-members' autonomous decision-making power. Nevertheless (despite management's interference), teams are still in a position to select their teamspeaker autonomously. The existence of teamspeakers is not seriously questioned by team-members (only 20 % reject the idea of having teamspeakers). It is important to note that the elective process enjoys a high degree of legitimacy in this system, because team-members favour the election of teamspeakers. Similarly, most team-members believed that *teamwork is not a waste of time*. This can be seen as a strong indicator that teamwork has partially fulfilled workers' expectation which were raised by management's promises during its introduction. Approximately half of the workers however express the believe that teamwork helps management more then it helps them. Teamwork also seems to function successfully as a forum for open discussion -without the attendance or interference of supervisors and management. Teamwork has consequently enabled workers to discuss their work; teamwork particularly created a forum in which the effects of Fordism and Taylorism can be discussed for the first time, despite the fact that teams have very limited power to alter the effects of these systems.

One of the crucial points about teamwork has been training; an area in which neither Opel's management nor the unions have done enough. This has also added to the workers' sense of grievance that teamwork did not bring the training workers were promised initially in management brochures in the teamwork agreement (cf. appendix I, no.5) and at mass meetings between management and workers. Equally, as far as the unions' training for teamwork is concerned it has not been a priority; IGM has not managed to educate Opel's teamspeakers sufficiently in terms of performing this role. In other words, IGM has failed to train teamspeakers to provide them with the appropriate union education so that the position of teamspeakers can also be that of a workplace representative.

To conclude, for Opel's management teamwork was successfully implemented plant-wide. Based on the experience of the 1970s in GM-Aspern, and Opel's pilot team, the works council was able to convince management to allow team-members to elect their teamspeakers autonomously. Teams and teamspeakers can to a certain limited degree protect individual workers from the power of supervisors. With the election of teamspeakers, Opel's management created a teamwork system with a degree of legitimacy.

## 4.3. Comparative Conclusions

Both Vauxhall and Opel were influenced by the publication of MIT's book on the introduction of lean production/teamwork into the motor-car industry; GME initiated the policy, but did not interfere directly with the introduction of teamwork leaving different IR systems to some degree to find their own models. While Vauxhall began by introducing teamwork in the door-section department, Opel started at final assembly. Given these pilot experiences, both Opel and Vauxhall went ahead and began to introduce their own version of teamwork. Teams were clearly defined in terms of tasks and roles and a number of supervisory responsibilities were shifted to teams.

The results, using Gulowsen's measurement, on Vauxhall and Opel can be compared. The degree of autonomy is about the same in most areas of implementation, except in the election or appointment system for teamleaders; Vauxhall is lower on the Gulowsen scale and higher at Opel (see appendix N3). Vauxhall's teams have no decision-making power, because management decides who will be the teamleader. Opel's teams on the other hand are given a certain amount of autonomy when compared to a number of motor-car plants (see appendix N4). These factors also mean that Vauxhall's teams have less input in their daily work situation compared to the teams at Opel. While Vauxhall's management keeps teams controlled through their teamleaders, Opel's teams not only elect teamspeakers, but they also have more autonomy. Opel's election model clearly shows a higher degree of acceptance by the workforce; Opel's management not only relies on teams to elect a *suitable* teamspeaker, but also on their ability to self-regulate, while Vauxhall's management has maintained the old supervisor structure. In contrast to Vauxhall, however Opel's teamspeakers are less exposed to management control and disapproval because they speak on behalf of a team. Opel therefore relies on decisions made by teams, whereas Vauxhall's management depends on decisions made by teamleaders. Therefore, the daily work situation at Opel is much more influenced by the existing teamwork, than at Vauxhall, where the teamleader not the team makes the decisions.

Consequently, while Vauxhall's management has stuck much more to the classic adversarial IR approach, Opel's management has moved more directly in the direction of workers' participation, i.e. towards a more *pluralist* frame of reference. It seems as if the German IR-system, and Opel's internal IR-system, as embodied in German law, means that management can give slightly more autonomy to its teams compared to Vauxhall. It seems the existing system of IR operating in both plants not only defines the level of autonomy, but also influences the way in which teamwork has been introduced and operated.

In Britain and in Germany, GME did not attempt to influence or change the IR systems, they merely used or adapted it, attempting to avoid conflicts with traditional workers' representatives. Teamwork was in both cases introduced into existing plants where a specific tradition of IR and a clear structure of representation already existed. However, in both cases GME's QNPS provided the guiding principles for the introduction of teamwork but this was adapted to different systems of worker's representation on the shopfloor. While Vauxhall's agreement specifically mentions the need to recognise union representation, Opel's system of representation is primarily based on law. In both Germany and in Britain, management had to seek an agreement with union representation/works council, for different reasons; in Germany it was a legal requirement and at Vauxhall management had to recognise existing union power. This resulted in independent agreements. The key feature of both team-concepts however was the teamleader; in one case (Opel) s/he is elected, on the other, Vauxhall, s/he is appointed. Teamwork resulted in approximately 400 teamleaders at Vauxhall and approximately 2,000 teamspeakers at Opel. When teamwork and teamleaders/teamspeaker are compared by using the same questionnaire in assigned areas (Opel's final assembly, Vauxhall's door-section), the following table shows the different responses:

Table 4.6.: Teamleaders and Team-Members at Vauxhall and Opel (in %)

Question (16):	all the time		often		once a while		never	
GM Plant Location:	GB	FRG	GB	FRG	GB	FRG	GB	FRG
a) How often do you get along with your teamleader?	24.1	32	29.6	40	35.2	26	3.7	2
b) How often does your teamleader help you with your job?	3.7	22	20	36	50	34	16.7	8
c) How often does your teamleader co-operate with you?	9.3	38	27.8	34	42.6	24	7.4	4
d) How often do you get the sense your teamleader respects you?	16.7	41,7	14.8	22,9	22.2	16,7	37	18,8
e) How often does your teamleader pressure you to submit suggestions?	0	2,0	13	6,1	72.2	36,7	9.3	55,1
f) How often does your teamleader listen to your ideas about making the job easier and safer?	9.3	58	18.5	20.0	38.9	20	25.9	2
g) How often does your teamleader put pressure on you to do your job?	14.8	4,2	16.7	8,3	16.7	45,8	40.7	41,7
h) How often does your teamleader think more like management than one of you?	42.6	8,7	22.2	21,7	16.7	17,4	11.1	52,2

While results to question a) are quite similar, it seems as if Opel's teamspeakers are more willing to help team-members compared to Vauxhall's teamleaders (question b). More significantly Opel's teamspeakers co-operate with team-members much more than Vauxhall's teamleaders. Since Opel's teamspeakers are elected, they pay much more attention to the views of their team-members and the reverse is also true. However, teamleaders in both cases do not seem to pressure their team-members for *Kai-zen*. One of the more interesting contrasts between the two sides is over issues like *making jobs easier and safer*. While only 9.3 % of Vauxhall's teamleaders listen to team-members' ideas about making a job easier and safer *all the time*; 58 % of Opel's teamspeakers felt that the teamleader was crucial to this. Vauxhall's teamleaders, it seems, are also more likely to pressure their team-members compared to Opel's teamspeakers.

The survey also demonstrated the independence of teamleaders and teamspeakers in workers' perspective. While according to the survey 42.6 % of Vauxhall's workers believe that teamleaders think *all the time* like management rather than like team-members, only 8.7 % seem to do so at Opel. In fact, while Vauxhall's teamleaders depend on management appointment, Opel's teamspeakers clearly depend on their team. As an overall result therefore, the relationship between Opel's teamspeakers and team-members is much better than in Vauxhall. While Vauxhall's team-members see their teamleader more as someone "outside the team", Opel's team-members see a teamspeaker as part of the team. Therefore, according to the survey Opel's teamspeakers

operate more closely with the team compared to Vauxhall's teamleaders and Opel's teamspeakers agree with management far less compared to Vauxhall's teamleaders. Not surprisingly, 66.7 % of Opel's team-members think there should be teamspeakers, while only 40 % of Vauxhall's team-members agree. Again, Opel's team-members want to be teamspeakers slightly more than Vauxhall's want to be teamleaders.

**Table 4.7.: Team-Members and Teamleaders at Vauxhall and Opel (in %)**

Question (17, 18, 20, 19):	YES	YES	NO	NO
GM Plant Location:	GB	FRG	GB	FRG
Do you think there should be a teamleader?	40.7	66.7	51.9	19.6
Would you like to become teamleader?	7.4	23.5	85.2	60.8
Do you think that the current system for selecting teamleaders is a fair one?	16.7	86.3	68.5	11.8
Do you think teamleaders should be elected?	75.9	86.2	13.0	5.9

One of the most obvious reasons for the difference in these results is that 86.3 % of Opel's team-members agree with the current election method for teamspeakers, while 68.5 % of the Vauxhall team-members disagree with their own system of appointment. This is reflected in a general support for an election system (Vauxhall: 75.9 %, Opel: 86.2 %). It seems that whether or not teamspeakers are elected crucially affects not only internal team relations, but also the team-members' general attitudes to teamwork. To compare views at Vauxhall and Opel, the results from both surveys are shown in the following table:

**Table 4.8.: Team-Members and Teamwork at Vauxhall and Opel**

Question (15):	agree		disagree	
	GB	FRG	GB	FRG
GM Plant Location:				
a) Helps me do my job better.	30.2 %	58.0 %	69.8 %	42.0 %
b) Gives me a chance to get to know people.	49.1 %	44.9 %	50.9 %	55.1 %
c) Is a waste of time.	36.0 %	28.6 %	64.0 %	71.4 %
d) Gives me a chance to raise my concerns.	32.1 %	89.6 %	67.9 %	10.4 %
e) Helps me feel I'm part of the company.	16.3 %	33.3 %	83.7 %	66.7 %
f) Is a way to get us to work harder.	83.7 %	42.0 %	16.3 %	58.0 %
g) Helps me see how my job fits in the overall scheme.	25.5 %	55.1 %	74.5 %	44.9 %
h) Gets us all pressuring one another.	64.0 %	46.0 %	36.0 %	54.0 %
i) Gives me a say over how my job is done.	23.5 %	62.0 %	76.7 %	38.0 %
j) Helps the company but not me.	79.6 %	52.1 %	20.4 %	47.9 %
k) Allows team-members to act together to express complaints.	50.0 %	94.0 %	50.0 %	6.0 %

Teamwork is viewed by Opel's team-members more positively than Vauxhall's team-members; while almost 60 % of Opel's team-members think teamwork helps, only 30

% of Vauxhall's team-members agree with this. A significant number of Opel's (71.4 %) and Vauxhall's team-members (64 %) also believe that teamwork is not a *waste of time*. 83.7 % of Vauxhall's team-members think that teamwork makes them work harder, while only 42 % at Opel agree to that proposition. Most surprisingly 94 % of Opel's team-members think that they can participate successfully; only 50 % agree with this at Vauxhall. Given all these factors, teamwork it seems, is much less attractive to Vauxhall's workers than to Opel's. Opel's version of teamwork is more likely not only to survive, but also to be more successful for both management and workers than Vauxhall's system, primarily because workers are more committed to working in teams, participation is higher and *team-teamspeaker* relations are better.



**Chapter**

**5**

**Representation**

## 5. The Structure of Representation

All capitalist societies have developed structures for workers' representation: national, industrial, corporation/company, plant and workplace. However this representative system is structured and a functional relationships exists between them; they depend on each other and cannot escape this structurally defined dependency whether at company or at plant level (Schmidt & Trinczek 1991:169).

The British and German industrial system both have systems for worker's representation that have developed in different ways for particular historical reasons and have different underlying concepts of industrial democracy. The strength of British unions, for example, has been traditionally the plant, where unions have no legal rights underpinning employee representation (Terry 1993:30). British unions have been structured, organised and resourced around unpaid voluntary activists with trade unions based firmly within plants. Their social and legislative basis has generally been established by voluntary agreement, collective bargaining and through state intervention (Fox 1985:373). British unions, then, can be characterised by two structural factors, one is voluntarism and the other is their base in the workplace. German representational structures, on the other hand, are defined by the absolute dominance of industrial unionism and a legal and dualist pattern of representation with works councils inside companies and unions based outside. Because of their legal status works councils were able to maintain their existence largely unaffected throughout the 1980s (Schmidt & Trinczek 1991:177) and to maintain their role for *conflict resolution* (Jacobi et al. 1992:218). For both, British and German workers' organisations workplace representation is crucial and *conflict resolution* on the shopfloor is central to their existence (Bean 1985:4). Comparing the British with the German IR system, Müller-Jentsch (1986:44) notes: "Two basic forms of industrial democracy can be distinguished: a) Participation based on co-operation by representatives independent from unions (for example works councils); this is found in Germany, Sweden, and

Austria; b) a conflict oriented model of workers control based on union representation in companies, which can be found in GB, France, and Italy".

The German system belongs to the former model and is part of a *pluralist* frame of reference, while the British *us and them* has the characteristics of a conflict oriented *adversarial* system. Participation in the German system can be *direct*, i.e. individuals or small production groups at shopfloor level, or *indirect* through unions or other representatives (Monat 1992:942). Participation in this sense can be seen as a method of decision-making "with the aim of bringing one's own interests into play" (Kißler 1994). The shopfloor is one of the key locations for this both in Britain and Germany. The existence of stewards, workplace representatives, and/or works councils as forms of *indirect* representation, and work-teams as a form of *direct* representation leads to the question that in a situation where both representative systems exist side by side, who will represent the interest of workers.

With *lean production*, management has attempted to develop a policy of using worker's drive for participation to increase productivity. British and German unions for a variety of reasons have agreed to management's request. There has been two union approaches to management's demands: a) the rejection of management's intention (*anti-incorporatism*), or b) the use of management's intention for participation (the *pluralist* frame of reference). IGM in Germany, therefore has detailed approaches and strategies to deal with management decisions in a pluralist fashion. AEEU and TGWU on the other hand have not responded in the same strategic way, because unlike IGM both unions are more decentralised and therefore leave responses to the shopfloor. Whereas IGM's head office can issue central guidelines on teamwork, AEEU's and TGWU's central offices have not given central guidelines on teamwork, largely because their stewards organisation is relatively independent from their central office. There is also some difference between the two unions at Vauxhall in terms of their approach to teamwork and, in fact, they often have opposing policies and strategies; the AEEU approach seems to be more *pluralist* while the TGWU's ap-

proach seems to be more *adversarial* and tend to oppose any management changes (i.e. teamwork) on the grounds that they are not good for workers.

## 5.1. Structure of Representation in GB & at Vauxhall Ltd.

One of the essential elements of *voluntarism* at Vauxhall has been the strategic use of *free* collective bargaining, (cf. Flanders 1974); sometimes both terms are used as a synonym. The idea of *voluntarism* in Great Britain has also meant that there are more options for the development of all three responses: (cf. *unitarist*, *pluralist*, *adversarial*), because it leaves unions and management the autonomy to adapt diverse approaches. Unlike Germany, British IR is not bound to a system of legal regulations forcing German IR towards the adaption of a *pluralist* frame of reference.

### 5.1.1. Shop Stewards in Britain

To understand the British IR system it is necessary to comprehend the central role of the shop steward. This has been examined in the following three stages: a) a description of a shop steward's role to show how the formal structure of stewards is portrayed in union rule books, b) the actual role, i.e. the reality of steward's representation on the shopfloor, and c) an evaluation is used to assess the role of stewards from a theoretical perspective.

#### a) Formal Description

Stewards are union representatives for a group of union members at shopfloor level. One of the earliest functions of stewards was recruitment and the collection of union dues. The steward's function is to be a union representative, but also to be able to mediate management decisions by participating in decision-making and representing

the views of union members. Stewards are therefore dynamic in terms of recruiting new members, representing members in individual and group grievance situations, bargaining over wages and conditions at plant level and sometimes company level, and representing union policy within the plant. Their representative powers are therefore wide and allows them to participate in IR at every level including wage bargaining. They represent the power of collective labour and the demands of their unions.

According to Coates and Topham (1988), most union rulebooks are silent on the issue of a steward's function and, indeed, the TGWU rulebook only states that they should represent their members in a defined work area and give the fullest support and protection to members (TGWU 1992:29); thus stewards are able to develop their function unaffected by specific directions from their union and to define and develop their role in their daily working relationship with their members and with management. This lack of precise definition is again another indication of their power in terms of its flexibility.

Because they are able to establish networks, stewards spend a considerable amount of time interacting with foremen. "The average time taken up by a steward's duties is over two hours per day" (Partridge 1977:34). "The role of lay union representation inevitably takes up a certain amount of employee time that would otherwise be spent working, exactly how much time is spent on these duties will depend on a variety of factors, such as the number of members and the number of other representatives in the establishment. Some levels of activity may well take place without the knowledge of management. However, in most cases workers' representatives have some form of agreement or understanding with management covering their union duties and activities" (Millward et al. 1992:122). An important factor for stewards' mobility is time off (cf. Coates and Topham 1988:159). Consequently, the actual working situation of stewards defines to a certain extent their ability to represent. The hypothesis could

then be: the less stewards are engaged in work, which demands a constant presence at a certain point of production, the better is their ability to represent the workforce.

### b) Actual Pattern

Although elections seems to be the most common way of selecting shop stewards, most unions do not demand a specific method for stewards' election. The TGWU (the union which organises production workers in the car industry) prescribes that, they, unlike teamleaders "should be elected by the membership" (TGWU 1992:29) and that these elections take place at least once every two years. The most common method for the election of stewards is a simple *show of hands* (Millward et al. 1992:136); less often, they may be elected at a union branch meeting (Coates and Topham 1988:154). Workplace elections undoubtedly strengthen the relationship between a workgroup and steward; in this way the section also becomes an important decision-making unit and a meaningful entity. A democratic election of this sort by the workgroup certainly fosters collectivism and, in part, it does this because stewards are so important to the lives of its members (Batstone et al. 1977:136).

Since stewards are union representatives, they can often use their knowledge to coordinate and prevent workers pursuing individualistic and sectional interests; they, unlike teamleaders, have usually developed a network on the shopfloor which provides not only an affirmation of the norms and values of steward leadership but also is able to disperse detailed information to facilitate stewards' independent actions in relation to problems that arise.

As with the relationship between the union and the stewards, so is the relationship with senior stewards; both relationships are based on independence and autonomy. It is expected that a steward will deal with problems and give senior stewards or the convenor strength from the shopfloor. It is essentially the stewards' network at the workplace which allows stewards' independent action in relation to work problems. In a relationship between stewards and a convenor, Batstone et al. (1977) stress that

stewards are able to handle the great bulk of issues by themselves. This not only keeps the convenor's time free to deal with management, but also strengthens the steward's position at the workplace. Purcell & Sisson (1984:106) argue that, in the long run, management itself is the most important influence shaping the behaviour of its stewards.

### c) An Assessment

One of the methods used to evaluate the functions of stewards are the categories developed by Coates and Topham (1988:157) and Partridge (1977:32): Stewards engage in the following activities: (1) spokesman for the workgroup, (2) disseminator of information between the organisation and the group, (3) bargaining over minor grievances, (4) monitoring of information, (5) liaison with other groups and with managers, (6) exercising leadership to strengthen the cohesion, and therefore the bargaining power of the group, (7) decision-making, (8) formal negotiation with senior management.

A steward organisation has been seen as evidence of a democratic form of decision-making and of a decentralisation of decision-making (Batstone et al. 1977:2). It could be argued that stewards are by definition a participative institution. However, while the way stewards are selected may indicate the existence of participation and democracy, their relationship with management can take different forms. These have been categorised by Batstone et al. (1977:35) as:

- The *leader* is a steward who is able to play a representative role in relation to his members, as s/he attempts to implement union principles. S/he not merely demonstrates a commitment to such goals but is generally able to achieve them.
- The *nascent leader* is often sponsored by a leader; s/he is committed to union principles, but without the support of other stewards s/he is unable to maintain the necessary representative role.
- The *cowboy*, by contrast, is able to play a representative role at least in the short-term, but is not committed to union principles as we have defined them. S/he is typically concerned with maximising the short-run earnings of her/his own particular group of members.
- Finally, the *populist* lacks a commitment to union principles and the ability or desire to be a representative; s/he acts as a delegate. Accordingly, her/his activities are generally much more determined by the expressed wishes of her/his members.

Whatever factors determine the basis for stewards elections, they do have a constituency and they are "closely identified with the workgroup they represent" (Terry 1984:71); this builds a grass roots base to many of the larger unions. Not only is the steward in the workplace the backbone of unions, but the stewards' main area of activity and even their identity is inextricably linked to the work area or workgroup. The relationship between stewards and groups is not only one of representation it is also one of protecting workers' interests. In the words of Terry (1993:13): "To the membership, the steward is the union" and yet they are at the very bottom of the union; it is, in fact, their bottom-up representative position that encourages the confidence of workers in their representative powers.

### 5.1.2. Stewards at Vauxhall

According to MSF's convenor Payne (1992), the attitude of Vauxhall's stewards towards management differs from union to union. Management's relationship to stewards varies depending on which union they are dealing with (MSF, AEEU, TGWU). Vauxhall's management regards the TGWU as the most important union because in terms of membership numbers, it is the most powerful union. Management claims that they wish to have good relations with the TGWU but undoubtedly, Vauxhall's personnel manager views the TGWU in the same way as the TGWU views management. Both see each other as "*us and them*". TGWU's convenor Jack (1993) is not alone in viewing management as an *agent of capitalism*; the general perception held among TGWU-stewards is that, whatever scheme management puts forward, it will represent management interests and will constitute an indirect or direct attack on worker's representational structures. Vauxhall's stewards frequently quote the personnel director's hostile statement: *burn the union* as an indicator of how *adversarial* management's attitudes are at Vauxhall. Despite this *adversarial frame* of reference, i.e. the state of *trench-war* between the plant's personnel director and the TGWU, both unions and management are continuously involved in negotiations and bargaining. To make in-



dustrial relations work in Vauxhall, the TGWU basically by-passes the personnel director by negotiating with another senior manager in personnel. In contrast to the TGWU, management-MSF relations are considered by management to be easier and more *pluralist*. Because of their small membership at Vauxhall MSF is not seen as a strong force and therefore has little weight with management despite its compromising approach. AEEU-management relations are less *adversarial* than the TGWU-management relations and MSF-management relations. In some cases the AEEU sides with management and has acted divisively against the TGWU, e.g. over teamwork; and in other cases they co-operate with the TGWU against management.

Informal meetings between the TGWU convenor and one of the senior personnel managers are important and seem to constitute the real grounds upon which most conflicts are resolved. The issue of teamwork, in fact, was first put to the TGWU in brief face-to-face informal discussions. Such discussions were used by management to assess the TGWU's opinion, while the TGWU used them to work out management's intentions. For many years these informal relationship between TGWU-stewards and a particular personnel manager have been developed in a piecemeal way. It is a curious aspect of the *adversarial* frame of reference that when neither side trusts the other in direct negotiations, deals and settlements are often made initially informally and secretly.

One of the important features of the system of shop stewards is that they are directly elected; the workgroup not only elects them and gives them legitimacy in form of direct democracy, they also speak on behalf of the group at the workplace. Vauxhall's stewards thus make overtime arrangements etc., with middle-management. Often they move into areas of responsibility that normally belong to supervisors. However far from being an assistant-supervisor, Vauxhall's stewards also deal with grievances and small scale bargaining. Since Vauxhall's stewards are an important link between their workgroup and management, they can usually decide how, when, and where etc., information is given to the shopfloor. They also link their group to others by talking to

other stewards as well as to other supervisors. By using their ability to communicate with other stewards and other groups, they are, at least in most areas, able to set up an internal communication structure that benefits the workforce. This creates the ground for a favourable bargaining position with management.

Because of the nature of their representative powers it would have been possible for Vauxhall's stewards to block the introduction of teamwork; certainly in areas represented by the TGWU votes by the workforce on the agreement came close to rejection. The decision on teamwork at Vauxhall depended on TGWU-stewards who were almost powerful enough to convince their members to vote for a rejection despite management's offer of a pay increase. Vauxhall's TGWU-stewards had the bargaining basis for negotiations with senior management; had the union decided, for example, not to accept teamwork, management would not have been able to by-pass the TGWU-stewards.

However on the whole, most stewards get the results of union agreements with management through their union convenors, so some decisions are made at the top and passed down and this was so in the case of teamwork. Members on the shopfloor expect their stewards to lead, to be committed to their workgroup and not to get too close to management. Stewards who become foremen for example are the subject of a good deal of criticism (cf. Batstone et al. 1977:33), because workers regard supervisors as being on the other side. Again however the shop stewards attitudes varied depending on their union's attitude. Unlike TGWU-stewards, many AEEU-stewards believed that their role included that of liaison with management over the maintenance of production (cf. Coates & Topham 1988:157). Given the craft orientation and the task of maintenance of AEEU members and stewards, Coates & Topham's general analysis applies to Vauxhall's AEEU-stewards because these groups of workers often act and think like Coates & Topham have described. Despite this, overall, a TGWU or AEEU shop steward is clearly seen by workers as representing their interests and are

elected to do this. Trust for AEEU and TGWU shop stewards then is central and is far greater than for the local trade union representatives.

### 5.1.3. Union Recognition

Like most other foreign owned enterprises in Britain (cf. Purcell et al. 1987:136), Vauxhall, because of the historical struggle of workers, recognises the existence of unions. Stewards' have been traditionally strong in the male-dominated manufacturing industries. Not surprisingly, the motor-car industry in the post-war period was able to benefit from general economic developments, and stewards in that industry became prominent and influential because they could secure increased earnings for their members (Terry 1984:72). North American-owned companies (Ford and Vauxhall) have long established stewards organisations. At Vauxhall particularly there was the plant had almost a *closed shop* system as almost all workers were in one of the three unions at Vauxhall. A small group of TGWU-stewards tend to lead opinion on the shopfloor. In addition to this, the motor-car industry was regarded as a sector in which stewards have normally been militant. However, this view changed during the 1980s. By the time teamwork was discussed with management, stewards were in a powerful bargaining position, and management realised that they needed the support of the TGWU shopfloor to introduce teamwork in production. Vauxhall has the typical steward system for the car industry (TGWU, AEEU, MSF). AEEU-members elected 72 stewards (47 %), TGWU: 71 (46 %), and MSF: 11 (7 %). Over 97 % of manual workers are in one or the other union.

Management's perception is that the TGWU is more inflexible and hostile than the AEEU, and relations between management and the TGWU have been continuously uneasy (Carr 1994:200). Even though the AEEU has slightly more stewards, the TGWU not only has more members, it is also more powerful. This is not only because the

AEEU has largely craft workers and skilled workers, but also because the TGWU is better organised; their network is stronger, and they organise production.

Management accepts that unions can support their members and represent them therefore Vauxhall's management does not directly try to by-pass them. The *adversarial* frame of reference is expressed in the teamwork agreement because on the one hand, "The Unions recognise the responsibilities of management to plan, organise and manage" (Vauxhall 1992:11). On the other hand, management recognises the right of the unions to represent the interests of, and communicate with, their members: "The company recognises the right of its employees to belong to a union and will encourage the employees to be members of the appropriate union" (Vauxhall 1992:11). While both sides agree on each other's responsibility, there is no mechanism for participation and negotiations are always conducted within an *adversarial* framework.

## 5.1.4. Inter-Union Relations

Relations between the unions at Vauxhall have been problematic for historical reasons. One source of division had been the AEU's Nissan deal (late 1980s) when the AEU not only excluded the TGWU by making a *single union deal* with Nissan's management, but also capitulated to the company; this has resulted in their *marginalisation* (Independent 15.6.92:4). The AEU-Nissan deal was not only widely discussed in Britain, but also deplored by the TGWU who tried to represent workers' interests at Nissan. The TGWU had also excluded the EETPU from meetings in the plant after their collusion with management at Wapping and their exclusion from the TUC. As the TGWU is not only the strongest union at Vauxhall, but tends to express the opinions of the workforce, it was able to convince MSF and AEU (before the merger with the EETPU), to exclude EETPU from meetings in the plant (after Wapping and the exclusion of the EETPU from the TUC). When EETPU merged with the AEU to

create the AEEU; TGWU-AEEU inter-union relations continued to be poor at Vauxhall.

As is common for the car industry, unions at Vauxhall have more or less clear areas of organisation, recruitment and responsibilities with a few overlapping areas. In general the following unions represent the following areas of production:

Table 5.1.: Unions and Areas at Vauxhall

Union:	Area of organisation within the plant:
AEEU	Craft and some production workers
TGWU	Most production workers
MSF	Staff or white collar workers (supervisor etc.)

TGWU and AEEU have their offices and their members on the shopfloor in order to be close to their members. Trade union membership follows the following pattern: AEEU 1,524 (36 %), TGWU 2,349 (55 %), and MSF 380 (9 %). Since the TGWU has more than 50 % of all union members and organises the most important part of the car plant (assembly line), it is in a strong bargaining position compared to the AEEU and MSF. In most cases, where decision-making by the unions is required, the TGWU is the leading force.

Both unions have their meeting base at the plant; unions see these facilities as the result of prolonged struggle with the employer, who, at the first opportunity, they feel would be glad to remove this facilities (cf. Coates and Topham 1988:147). Both unions have offices in the plant, where stewards and convenor meet daily or weekly on an informal and individual basis. TGWU-stewards finance their own office utilities which are supplied by a monthly lottery. With the agreement on teamwork, both (AEEU and TGWU) were offered desks in the personnel department, but rejected the offer in order to maintain immediate and direct communication with the shopfloor. Thus, the AEEU and the TGWU maintained separate offices with one convenor and staff for each union. Only the part-time MSF senior steward took a desk in the per-

sonnel department. To facilitate the representation of union members, Vauxhall recognised these facilities enabling the unions to operate as a representative.

Table 5.2.: Unions and Representatives

AEEU	3 full-time senior representatives (Engineering) 1 part-time senior representative (EETPU)
MSF	1 part-time in-plant senior representative
TGWU	3 full-time in-plant senior representatives

In the event of full-time representatives being absent because of sickness or company approved union activities, Vauxhall allows stewards to replace them. In most cases this is done by the deputy convenor or equivalent steward. Any change to the number, or geographical distribution of representatives within the plant, are matters for joint discussion. The agreement on teamwork did not alter the number of stewards, therefore, the power relation between the unions did not change with the introduction of teamwork; the number of representatives and areas of representation remained the same. According to Jack (1994), since all three unions were concerned with teamwork management, a committee was set up comprising all three unions.

According to the teamwork agreement, convenor, deputy convenor, and secretary are free of work assignments and are able to devote their time to union affairs. Although both the TGWU and the AEEU fought together on the issue of maintaining their own headquarters on the factory floor, this did not bridge other more fundamental differences in their approach to IR. However, both unions feared incorporation into management's agenda and did not want to move too close to the personnel department which would mean separating from their members and the work of the stewards. AEEU and TGWU maintain their position as being *us* and not the *them*. This constitutes a strong rejection of either an *unitarist* frame of reference or even a *pluralist* one, i.e. direct and daily contact with the personnel department was avoided because this could be seen as a process of compromise and absorption into management's schedule.

## 5.1.5. Committees

The present inter-union relation at Vauxhall differs from other workplaces. Some workplaces have a *Joint Shop Steward Committee* (JSSC) at both plant and company level. At Vauxhall, each union has monthly meetings of stewards which are held separately. These are granted by management, but such meetings have to take place on separate days/dates each month. According to the agreement, stewards' meetings cannot exceed one and half hours in duration and stewards who attend these meetings outside their normal staff hours will be paid one and half hours at the applicable overtime rate; this applies to meetings that are held between an early shift and a late shift. Vauxhall's JSSC has been held in the past but these meetings only took place in connection with wage negotiations.

At Vauxhall, the small degree of success of organised participation shows neither unions, management or stewards favour a *pluralist* approach. Vauxhall's stewards prefer to use collective bargaining as a means of confronting management rather than participating in management lead institutions. Given the unions view of committees for example, Vauxhall's unions were not very interested in a committee to introduce teamwork. "According to the agreement, the Luton management wanted to have a *Joint Plant Committee* (JPC) to improve IR in the plant. According to Jack (1993), this committee was composed of 17 members in total, the meetings were held once a month, the JPC was composed of 7 company members and 10 union representatives. The seven company members were appointed by management, including the JPC chairman and secretary who had an administrative support function; the 10 union members were: 4 AEEU representatives from the engineering section, 1 from EETPU section, 1 from MSF, who was the part-time senior representative, and 4 TGWU representatives. The unions elected one of their JPC members as chairman, the convenor of the TGWU, John Jack.

The agreement demanded that the unions were totally committed to the principle of working together and that the union chairman would endeavour to speak with one voice for all unions and would act collectively in the interests of all the employees and the unions at Vauxhall. Given the difficult relationship between the unions, management attempted to get all unions together to avoid inter-union conflicts and to be able to reach a uniform agreement with the whole workforce. In practice, however, this did not work; inter-union disputes broke out immediately and the AEEU complained about the chairman from the TGWU. The agreement (Vauxhall 1992:24-33) states:

Full JPC meetings will normally be held monthly, but special meetings may be arranged. Formal minutes will be prepared by the secretary and agreed by the JPC chair and will be shown to the union chair prior to publication. The JPC may, following discussion, establish sub-committees to deal with specific issues. The terms of reference and composition of such sub-committees will be determined by the JPC (within the broad general terms of reference). All such subcommittees will be required to report findings and recommendations to the full JPC as requested.

Two other issues here are important, it could be argued that: a) by forcing unions together management *produced* inter-union conflict and in effect weakened the more *adversarial* position of the TGWU to teamwork and, b) by setting up a sub-committee system on *specific issues* (cf. Ramsay 1977:482) that are undefined, management could avoid the central committee and control the whole process. However with the introduction of a committee to discuss teamwork and other issues of IR, management not only tried to move the unions from an *adversarial frame* of reference to a *pluralist* one, but it also tried to get the unions to speak with one voice. The minutes of the JPC, from the beginning show that, the JPC was used by management and, in a sense, was doomed to fail not only because of direct management attempts to control it but because it was quickly obvious that unions and management had major disagreements. However, the unions demanded that the JPC should not just be used for management presentations on teamwork (JPC 12.1.1993) but that unions should be given time to raise their concerns; management accepted this demand.



Since GM's practice is to set different plants in competition with each other, the union demanded information on the future production of the 2900 car series (Cavalier). In a letter to the JPC, the union demanded that unless management placed this on "the agenda for the next JPC then we should give serious consideration to the future of the JPC" (TGWU 10.11.1993). The TGWU threatened to leave the JPC unless the issue was discussed. In a joint letter from the AEEU, TGWU, and MSF, the union side of the JPC demanded, "that the JPC should not, under any circumstances, become another Joint-Consultative Committee (JCC)" (JPC-Union: 15.11.1993). The unions successfully stopped the JPC from becoming another JCC; the JCC had been seen by the unions as a management committee which did not give unions a voice and a forum in which management did not allow unions to raise their own issues. Management-union relations in the JPC remained tense; letters and arguments instead of discussions, ensued between unions and management. Conflicts over a range of issues continuously created disagreement and a breakdown of discussions. An examples of this from the JPC minutes reads: *The trade union chairman reported that the company's proposal on work measurement was not acceptable* (JPC 21.12.1993). Not only did the union attack management and threaten to leave the JPC on several occasions, management also attacked the union consistently refusing them a voice on several issues that they felt were crucial.

During a JPC meeting on the 21st of December 1993, "the personnel manager showed a chart indicating the number of supervisors and the corresponding number of agreed stewards (August 1990) the numbers showed 24 more stewards than supervisors" (JPC 21.12.1993:5). Because of the agreement on teamwork, management has been able to reduce the number of supervisors because some of their functions were moved to teamleaders in ratio to the number of supervisors. Management then moved to try to reduce the number of stewards; this was felt to be a direct attack on union representation. During this meeting, the union side of the JPC strongly rejected the link between the number of supervisors and the number of stewards. During the following meeting (January 1994), management again stated its "concern about the imbalance

between the number of stewards and supervisors" (JPC 18.1.1994:2); again unions rejected this argument and stated that the central issue was on the recognition of stewards and argued for maintaining their numbers. They also discussed the option of de-recognising supervisors and recognising teamleaders. Management replied that the issue would be "put on ice until a meeting could be convened on the subject" (JPC 18.1.1994). During the following meeting (February 1994) further conflicts took place, the "Trade Union Chairman said that the Japanese philosophy of the company was not the same as the one that operated in Japan where the employees had jobs for life. Rover in the UK also had a jobs for life agreement" (JPC 15.2.1994:4). Management replied that redundancies were made voluntarily and according to the *Early Separation Programme*. A further damaging conflict arose over the issue of *outsourcing* of the *soft-trim*. Unions demanded that "consultation should have occurred at an earlier stage" (JPC 15.2.1994). The unions clearly indicated during the meeting that despite the ostensible purpose of the JPC, i.e. communication and negotiation, management still had a hidden agenda and did not discuss its policies and decisions with the unions. The issue of *outsourcing* particularly created the most frustration among the unions at the JPC and among union members. The unions declared that "GME would not be allowed to get its own way on this issue" (JPC 15.2.1994). Management saw this as union interference in a management issue and was afraid that the unions would strike and hoped this was not "a statement indicating action" (JPC 15.2.1994). One of the first actions taken by JPC's TGWU-chairman was to opt-out of the meeting and the other unions followed. This marked the end of the JPC experiment with management and unions forced back into their traditional *adversarial* frame of reference with no institutionalised structure to discuss IR issues.

There were no further JPC meetings after the 21st of June 1994. According to the TGWU-convenor, Jack (1994), the TGWU and other unions left, because "the JPC was a waste of time and they (management) gave us (unions) only the information that they choose". Jack (1994) also states that, the JPC was not there to solve problems; "sometimes we found out something, then we would challenge them and all they

would say was, we did not want to tell you the bad news". In summary, the JPC was, for the unions, another JCC, and a clear split divided it along the lines of *them* (management) and *us* (unions). The committee never established itself as a forum for discussions on IR or teamwork and it never achieved any decision-making power. The meeting did not serve as an organised forum for participation; management's attempt to provide a forum of institutionalised IR (JPC) as a pluralist institution did not succeed because the form itself was ineffective; management tended to lead it in its own favour and the unions saw no possibility of real discussions or decision-making on issues that affected their membership.

### 5.1.6. Convenors and Stewards

Of the TGWU-stewards at Vauxhall, a small group of eight to ten senior stewards and the convenor from the core group, are the *opinion-leaders* (Batstone et al. 1977:100), in the sense that they lead and represent opinions from the shopfloor; i.e. not that they create opinions. This group is able to deal with all aspects of the work situation (production), because they have developed a particularly strong network of contacts on the shopfloor. Most of the stewards (AEEU and TGWU) trust and respect them because they have achieved major successes in negotiations, and because they have established strong contacts with other influential stewards, union members, and with management, i.e. this is the basis of their legitimacy.

Compared with other unions like the AEEU, and to a greater extent MSF, the TGWU was able to maintain a high degree of independence in terms of its relationship to management. Most of the TGWU-stewards do not fall into the category of *populist stewards* (Batstone et al. 1977:59), because they co-operate closely with other shop stewards in the handling of issues. In contrast to a *populist steward* most TGWU-stewards are *leaders*, able to handle problems themselves, and the core group of senior stewards expects them to do so.

Batstone et al. (1977:45) have labelled a *core-group* of stewards as *quasi-elite*; this *core-group* "consists of experienced stewards who are in close contact with the convenors and upon whom the convenors rely. They play a major role in decision-making". This can be said about the *core-group* of shop stewards at Vauxhall; i.e. TGWU-stewards do form a *core-group*; while the AEEU-stewards do not. Other stewards, outside the *core-group*, lack comparable influence and have to work through the opinion-leaders. Members of the *core-group* are often better able to deal with management because of their greater resources and skills. The forum to influence stewards outside the *core-group* meets at the monthly stewards meeting, where the convenor and the *core-group* not only reaffirm the norms of steward leadership (cf. Batstone et al. 1977:78) but also discuss union and management policy. In addition, Vauxhall's TGWU *core-group* issues its policy statements during these meetings.

There is, however, also a small group of radical stewards outside the *core-group* who are strong enough at times to challenge the *core-group* of senior stewards and the convenor. This *radical-group*, which is strongly committed to union principles, is made up of approximately five to seven young TGWU-stewards who are able to exert influence on the majority of stewards on certain issues. As in the case of teamwork, often the *core-group* invites members of this *radical-group* to informal discussions in order to get their policy accepted by the stewards assembly as a whole.

### 5.1.7. Stewards' External Relations

Stewards at Vauxhall have good relationships with their workgroups, yet the negative side of Vauxhall's strong plant based organisation is often the weak link in the external union organisation. Often the decentralisation of such a structure of representation is reflected in their distant relationship with the formal union structure, i.e. to each particular unions' employed full-time official (Terry 1993:12). Both major unions differ in

their relationship to their external union representative. Since the present AEEU full-time official was a former employee of Vauxhall, the AEEU has good relations with its full-time official and works closely with him (cf. Boraston 1975:16). In contrast is the negative relationship of TGWU-stewards to their local TGWU full-time official; he has been in office for seven years, but there is not much contact between him and the stewards who consider him unsupportive of their representative work (Boraston 1975:41). Contacts with TGWU-stewards and the convenor at IBC (Luton) are better; they attended the pre-teamwork meetings with Vauxhall's TGWU-stewards and TGWU-members to discuss the new agreement on five Saturdays before the final vote was taken in 1992. TGWU-stewards also had contacts with TGWU-stewards at Ford-Dagenham and Ford/IVECO on these issues.

TGWU-stewards of the *core-group* whose legitimacy is strong with the workforce also have international contacts to other GM plants and with other stewards from the European and American car industry. These international meetings are not held on a regular basis. There is no European works council for GM and the only contact that has been established on an international basis was a meeting of European GM plants in Belgium in 1987 and one in 1994. The other contact was a company-organised visit of the TGWU convenor to NUMMI in 1986, which lasted three weeks. Besides this, TGWU-stewards attended the TGWU-Seminar on the *European Motor-Car Industry* at Eastbourne in December 1992; this seminar was attended by union representatives from all major European member states.

Every two months a *Combined Committee* meeting of British GM plants is held, where the *core-group* of each plant meets. These meetings are attended by stewards from AEEU and TGWU, but not by officials from either of the unions. Both unions also have *Joint National Committees* which meets every two months and include stewards and union officials. Under the agreement, management allows stewards reasonable paid time off for union duties relevant to the company. However, where the representative is taking part in:

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- branch, area or regional meetings of the Union where the business of the union is under discussion
  - meetings of official policy making bodies such as the executive committee or annual conference
- 

such time off granted by the company is normally on an unpaid basis.

## 5.1.8. Stewards and Workgroups

Crucial for effective representation to take place is the stewards' link to the workplace because if any of the unions are to bargain effectively stewards need the backing of their members; workgroup support becomes the crucial element in this structure of representation. Each workgroup elects stewards every two years. In most cases, approximately 25 to 35 members elect one steward in a secret ballot. Such a constituency is small enough to represent workers within one production area, though it may vary in size from area to area depending on the actual working environment. There is also a dependency of stewards' activity on their workplace because whatever working situation they are in, they are able to take time off for union representation. However, the actual size of stewards' constituencies vary between 4 and 60 for TGWU-stewards at Vauxhall. The average size of a typical steward's constituency is 32 members in one workgroup (appendix P5); this is significantly smaller than shown in surveys of British IR.

With Vauxhall's agreement, management committed itself to work with the unions in relation to the issue of time off for union duties. The guiding principle of this was the ACAS Code of Practice No. 3 "Time Off for Union Duties and Activities" (1991) or any subsequent Code of Practice that supersedes this. Each steward is granted facilities to deal with issues arising in the area to which they are assigned. The steward must notify a supervisor when s/he leaves the area and the supervisor will make the necessary arrangements within a reasonable period of time. According to the new

agreement, management allows stewards to take time off for their work as union representatives. In addition, management "recognises the exclusive right of each union to communicate with its own members" (Vauxhall 1992:11); management recognises that stewards need to be given sufficient time off to enable them to represent their members. Under teamwork conditions, which includes work distribution among a team, any absent team-member has to be covered by a teamleader. Teamleaders not only put pressure on each team-member to attend, but also on stewards who are team-members not to leave the team, otherwise teamleaders have to work on the line themselves. Time off for stewards who are part of a team is always a potential area of conflict between teamleaders and stewards.

In the teamwork agreement at Vauxhall (1992), management views on the issue of conflict are explicitly stated, i.e. management does not want conflict, it wants compliance through agreements; "management recognises the need to foster and maintain the best possible relationships with its employees based on a spirit of care, unity, teamwork, mutual trust and co-operation". Here, management contrasts its section on "time off for stewards" with a description of teamwork and states that the relationship should be one of *unity* and *mutual trust*. On the one hand management recognises union's right to solve conflicts (pluralism) while on the other hand management neglects the existence of conflicts by stating the ideal of a relationship based on *unity* (unitarism). Despite the overall tendency of Vauxhall's IR towards an *adversarial frame* of reference, both sections of the agreement show the difference between management's view and the view held by the unions. Unions are interested primarily in maintaining their representative role which clearly *adversarial*, while management disguise their own *adversarial* attitude with terms such as *unity*, *trust* and *teamwork*. Even within the agreement *adversarial* attitudes between management and unions can be clearly detected. The role of the stewards is clearly in conflict with their role as team-members; on the other hand, the agreement allows teamleaders to have representatives functions that overlap those of shop stewards. Management desire for shop

stewards and teamleaders to work as team-members in the spirit of *trust* and *unity* is often belied by the actual practice of management and the team structure set up by management with their tendency to undermine the position of the shop stewards.

## 5.1.9. Conclusions

As a shop steward's power is based on her/his ability to organise independently of state regulation, they exercise leadership in the work area where they are elected, and they are therefore committed to a process of networking which is based on union shopfloor organisation. This gives them not only power but a certain degree of resilience. TGWU-stewards are more or less *leaders* in their work area; the *leader* figure is in fact more likely to be found in an IR system based on this sort of *adversarial frame* of reference. Given the power of all three unions, management has been forced to recognise the importance of union agreement. The TGWU is the *opinion leader* and is the strongest union at Vauxhall.

Given management's relationship to unions and the TGWU's relation to management, attempts to create a more pluralist framework have not been successful. TGWU convenors and stewards lead in the direction of an *adversarial frame* of reference, i.e. become the nature of their role. The decision for example about office space in the personnel department demonstrates that the general relationship of management and union can be described as *us and them*; it is one characterised by suspicion and separation. While the teamwork agreement shows that management was not able to bypass or de-recognise the unions; even if it wanted this; it shows that an IR system based on a *unitarist* frame of reference does not exist. Attempts by management to get the unions to believe that a *pluralist* frame of reference could work failed; TGWU's opinion leaders continue to regard committees and IR institutions negatively as they fear incorporation into management's agenda. Since the *unitarist* frame of reference option was closed for management and they also failed to move IR more to-



wards a *pluralist* frame of reference, management-union relations remained in what can only be called a continuing *adversarial* frame of reference.

To summarise, the strength of the TGWU lies in its ability to organise important parts of the plant, which is still, in effect, an informal closed shop. Management needed the TGWU's approval to introduce teamwork and therefore was not able to by-pass unions or de-recognise them (*unitarist* frame of reference). IR at Vauxhall can still be described as an example of an IR framework of *adversarialism* because stewards have maintained their independence from management. Their strength is based on their close links to their constituency or workgroup and most stewards still view management as the enemy. During the period of the introduction of teamwork, TGWU and AEEU-stewards were able to maintain the number of stewards and to negotiate time off for representation. Management has accepted their role and function.

**Chapter**

# **5.2.**

## **The Structure of Representation in Germany and at Opel**

## 5.2. The Structure of Representation in Germany and at Opel

Workplace organisation in Germany and at Opel is characterised by a *dual structure* of legally prescribed works councils and union workplace representatives. The concept of a *pluralistic* IR has resulted in a *constitutional factory* (Müller-Jentsch 1986:42). Part of the 19th century strategy by the German bourgeoisie to undermine workers attraction to socialism introduced consultation and participation schemes for workers. Müller-Jentsch (1986:41) argues that the German dualist system with its *pluralist* frame of reference has its origins in a strategy to avoid a workers' take-over of industry by offering them some degree of participation and power. As a result of this, there is *collective bargaining* on one level and *participation* on other levels. Usually collective bargaining in the German IR system takes place at a regional or national and sectorial level. For example, negotiations on wages, work time, etc. take place between an employer's federation representing, for example, all employers in the metal industry (i.e. sectorial) in a geographical area (for example the state Hesse is a collective bargaining region) and the trade union in that sector (metal industry, i.e. IGM) and region.

The works councils' role is defined by law, i.e. in the Works Constitution Act (BetrVG). Union lay representatives or workplace representatives (*Vertrauensperson*, VPs), on the other hand, have no formal recognition within existing workplace legislation and act essentially as an information link between unions and membership. German labour law regulates the proceedings of institutions like the works council, but does not dictate the outcome of negotiations between management and works councils. In short, the law directs, arranges, and controls institutionalised IR, but does not determine outcomes.

In order to evaluate the structure of representation in the German IR system and at Opel, the following sections will: examine a) the Works Constitution Act (*Betriebs-*

*verfassungsgesetz*) and the works council (*Betriebsrat*), b) industrial unionism and trade unions, c) the role of the workplace representatives (*Vertrauensperson*, VP), and d) how the preceding three aspects (a-c) work at Opel.

## 5.2.1. Works Constitution Act and Works Councils

To explore the important role of the Works Constitution Act and the works councils in German IR, the following section will examine: a) the legal prescription of the works councils, which largely defines the way in which they operate, b) the actual practice of IR at the works council-management level, and c) give an assessment of the function of the works councils.

### a) The Legal Prescription of Works Councils

German IR can be characterised as a "separation of unions and plant-level representation through the works councils, and the restriction of unionised collective bargaining to regional wage bargaining" (Herding 1972:1). Streeck (1988), and Lane (1988) have emphasised three distinctive features:

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- (a) The rigidity of employment relations imposed by the BetrVG.
  - (b) The works council, not the union, is the representative body, competent to negotiate technical rationalisation. works councils tend to be dominated by skilled workers who have less to fear from change. They see their main role as managing transitions and concentrating on achieving gains.
  - (c) Pluralism makes it likely that greater workers' responsibility for production, implied by the new production concepts, is not mis-used.
- 

At company level, the "German system of codetermination is usually considered to be the most highly developed example of employee participation" (Hall 1993:1). However, there are considerable variations between different industries, unions, firms, and even within single plants. Company-based codetermination can be summarised as

having the following features: a) business affairs are not directly affected by codetermination, b) a spirit of mutual trust between management and works councils exists, c) works councils are not a union organisation in companies, d) collective bargaining does not override company codetermination, but strives to improve it.

Given the long existence of legalised and institutionalised forms of participation. German IR can be characterised as having a *pluralist* frame of reference in which unions have a very limited representative function inside companies and no legal recognition. The BetrVG (1950s) "affects 15 million workers out of 21 million" (Briefs 1992:104) and 90 % of all German private companies that have 5 or more workers (Maitland 1983:41). The BetrVG regulates the ratio between works council-members and workers (Kittner 1991). With an increase of workers, the number of works council-members also increases, but the correlation is regressive, in terms of a proportion of works council-members to the workforce. Small companies have more works council-members than larger companies (appendix P7). As the number of workers increase, the number of works council-members increases at a lower rate. However, the legal power of the works council remains unchanged. Sec. 2 BetrVG demands that works councils and management work in a *spirit of mutual trust*. It seems as if the law recognises management's right to manage, but allows works councils to counteract the worst effects of management, i.e. management is not free to adapt a *macho-management* style as disruption or disturbance of works councils constitute a criminal offence (sec. 119 BetrVG). The aim is to ensure continuous production with as few management/worker conflicts disrupting production as little as possible.

Companies without works councils have virtually no trade union organisation (Schmidt & Trinczek 1991:181). In companies with works councils, elections take place through a list of candidates nominated by unions or any group of workers. IGM's workplace representatives are a recruiting ground for works council-members

(Shire 1991:14). In 80 % of all works council's elections they are elected from a union list (Purcell 1993:7). Composing such a list for the election of a works council is a complicated manoeuvre negotiated between different interest groups. Originally a works council-term of office was one year, under the BetrVG of 1920, two years in 1952, three years in 1972, and it finally reached four years in 1988 (Keller 1993:64). Hanau & Adomait (1986:122) noted two different participation rights for works councils:

a)	consultation and access to advice	sec. 90, 92, 96 97, and 102 BetrVG
b)	right of information	sec. 80, 89, 90, and 99 BetrVG, including the right to view management documents (sec. 80 and 83 BetrVG)

The amendment to BetrVG in 1972 grants works council the right to extensive information before rationalisation measures are introduced (cf. new work organisation like teamwork). Works councils also have rights to co-decision-making (sec. 80, 90). Works councils also have a duty to reject any re-organisation of work if it is not in accordance with the principle of *humanisation of work*. Any new form of work which disadvantages workers, more than traditional work practices, can be rejected. Any work reorganisation (cf. teamwork) requires considerable discussion and negotiation with works councils. Although management is legally free, after consultation with the works council, to go ahead with new production plans, it must negotiate the terms of change; otherwise works councils can ask a labour court to force management to consult with them. The level of influence increases or decreases depending on the subject area; these are categorised in terms of: a) *social affairs*, b) *personnel affairs*, and c) *business affairs* (Müller-Jentsch 1986:223):

Table 5.3: Participation under the BetrVG

Item	Social Affairs:	Personnel Affairs:	Business Affairs:
Co-Determination:	Sec. 87: Work time, Holiday, Wages, Bonus, Sec. 91: Human Work	Sec. 94: Questionnaires, Sec. 95: Assessment, Sec. 98: Training	Sec. 112: Social Plan (Redundancies, Closures of Production, etc.)
Veto:		Sec. 99: Employment, Job Descriptions, Transfers Sec. 102: Dismissal	
Information and Consultation:	Sec. 89: Health and Safety	Sec. 92: Personnel Planning, Sec. 102: Dismissal	Sec. 90: Construction, Technology, Production Process, Workplace, Sec. 106: Business Committee, Sec. 111: Relocation of Production

Management and works councils do not agree on everything. However it only rarely occurs that an issue is submitted to arbitration (Keller 1993:66). Establishment-level arbitration committees are composed of an equal number of management and works council representatives headed by an independent (usually a retired) labour judge. The next stage is a special courts system called *labour courts*; at a labour court both sides can present their views and opinions.

Opel's works council is entitled to considerable resources, including the option for the works council to use consultants, which reflects the level of professionalism of the works council. Opel's works council also has permanent advisors and is even large enough to have a *Referent*, i.e. a graduate *advisor*. Besides secretarial support for Opel's works council, the *advisor* plays an important role in supporting it by making links with other plants. According to Opel's *advisor* Herber (1994) "so far, there has been no industry-wide meeting of *advisors* in the German car industry", but there is a network for information exchange between all the *advisors*. Whenever *advisors* of works councils do not have direct contact to other *advisors*, they have contacts to works council-members.

### b) The Actual Practice of Industrial Relations

Codetermination is an important factor, but not at the workgroup level, rather at a level above the group (Keller 1993:61). Codetermination enables works councils to participate in management decisions and prevents managers acting directly against works councils (Turner 1991:165). The stringent legal regulations (Hall 1993:5) that control this has led to a "high degree of juridification of German industrial relations" (Jacobi et al. 1992:227).

### c) An Assessment

It is largely because of the legal basis of works councils that IR in Germany tends towards greater agreement rather than opposition and conflict (Keller 1993:63). Works

councils cannot refuse to participate and operate in an *adversarial* manner with management, as all forms of industrial action, particularly strikes are outlawed. Works councils also cannot fit into a *unitarist* frame of reference, i.e. total compliance to management, because legal requirements almost *force* them to participate and represent the worker's view. They cannot in a sense neglect their own rights by non-participation; they are made to feel that they are an integral part of a system that at least listens to their voice. The rights of the works councils can be assessed on a *strong-medium-weak* matrix:

Table 5.4.: Legal Rights according to BetrVG

Intensity:	Social	Personnel	Business
Co-Determination:	STRONG	MEDIUM	WEAK
Right to Veto:	MEDIUM	STRONG	WEAK
Info. & Consult.:	STRONG	STRONG	STRONG

This matrix shows the strength of participation in different areas; works councils have the strongest influence over social issues, and the more the issue relates to business affairs the weaker their voice or legal rights become.

German unions are often viewed as a mixture of *Ordnungsfaktor* (guarantor of stability) and *Gegenmacht* (counteracting power). While the concept of *Ordnungsfaktor* has strong implications for a *unitarist* frame of reference, *Gegenmacht* operates in an *adversarial frame* of reference (cf. Schmidt 1971), i.e. worker's power counteracts the worst excesses of management control.

## 5.2.2. Industrial Unionism and Trade Unions

Trade unions and works councils are the central pillars (Schmidt and Trinczek 1991:167) of German IR. However, both are not separated from each other and they do not operate in different arenas of IR. The dual system is, as Thelen (1991:19) correctly assessed, "mutually reinforcing". Unions supply works councils with informa-



tion and expertise, through educational courses, or advise them through their full-time officials; while works councils sustain union organisation by recruiting members and functioning as an arm of the union at the workplace. Unions, like IGM, are organised on an industrial base (*Industrieverbandsprinzip*). In the 1990s, "IGM held on to its high membership levels and density" (Turner 1991:104). IGM is one of 16 unions in the DGB, the German Trade Union Federation. Each of the unions covers one or more industries and there is very little competition among unions. Outside plants, regional collective bargaining on wages, work time, etc. is put in the legal framework of the *Tarifvertragsgesetz* which together with section 9.3 of the German constitution sets the boundaries of IR.

Works councils and unions "are mutually dependent, having a close and stable division of labour, and are reliable partners within a network of stable cooperation" (Jacobi et al. 1992:218). Within this *dual system* unions and employers' associations are responsible for collective bargaining at regional and sectorial level. Issues for collective bargaining which relate to the whole industry or to the region are their concern (cf. wages, work time, holidays, etc.), but not plant-specific issues (cf. teamwork). Despite the fact that teamwork is not a regional or industry-specific issue, IGM did make recommendations on the introduction of teamwork, however they did not issue a common and standardised format for company agreements. IGM did not negotiate with the employer federation on the issue of teamwork; IGM had two strategies on this front: firstly, defend the workforce against the possible negative effects of teamwork; secondly, develop and promote an independent union vision and strategy for the shape and content of teamwork. Typically, union policy strongly influenced the works councils. In the 1980s, IGM demanded that works councils should reject overtime; Opel's works council met IGM's demand, even though Opel's works council had no legal obligations to follow union policy it nevertheless did so in this typical case.

## 5.2.3. Workplace Representatives

German style union-stewards are *workplace representatives* or *Vertrauenspersonen* (VPs); i.e. they are a voluntary system of representation. Only union members of at least one year's standing can be nominated. Elections of workplace representatives take place in their assigned work areas; this is generally a small group of union members at the workplace. Elections for workplace representatives take place every three years (works council: every four years). Workplace representatives are elected by union members only. According to the IGM (1980) rule book workplace representatives have the following duties which tend to be defined rather passively, i.e. they inform, collect, pass on, encourage, distribute, etc.:

- 
- inform union members concerning union policies,
  - inform union members about collective agreements, company agreements etc.,
  - inform union members about resolutions of union committees,
  - encourage union members to discuss union issues,
  - participate in union meetings and union education,
  - encourage union members to discuss, organise, participate, & carry out industrial action,
  - keep union membership records and inform the union office about new members, transfer of union members etc.,
  - distribute union newspapers, etc. to their members.
  - maintain communication between union members and union organisation,
  - develop union membership throughout the company,
  - encourage union members to participate in union education,
  - advise works council before it signs company agreements with management,
  - inform union members about resolutions of works council meetings,
  - work towards improvements of working conditions,
  - maintain contact with local and regional union offices (Koopmann 1984).
- 

The recruitment of new members is one of the crucial links between IGM and Opel's works council because unions need works councils for membership recruitment to secure their existence. Brock et al. (1969:86) suggest such a division of representation between workplace representatives and works councils has made representation more effective because workplace representatives depend largely on information given by

the works councils (Brock et al. 1969:75). Works councils on the other hand equally depend on workplace representatives, because they inform them of shopfloor issues.

## 5.2.4. Industrial Relations at Opel

80 % of all blue-collar workers are IGM members, even though the closed shop is illegal in Germany (Miller 1978:340). According to works council-member Franz (1993) "the IGM membership in staff areas is between 25 and 30 %". The staff union DAG (*Deutsche Angestellten Gewerkschaft*), has one works council-member at Opel and mainly organises white collar workers. Opel's smallest union is the Christian Metalworkers Association (CMV, *Christlicher Metallarbeiter Verein*). According to Streeck (1984:9), CMV and DAG have small pockets of membership in the plant, but numerically and politically they are insignificant.

### a) Opel's works councils

Opel's works council holds significant powers and Streeck (1992:180) has noted that the situation is well described by a GM manager who after a period at Opel concluded: "Without the works council, nothing happens, with the works council, everything happens". Most of the day-to-day business is conducted through committee meetings with managerial counterparts. The nature of teamwork at Opel demonstrates the significance of Opel's works council because it has a voice at various levels in management decision-making, and engages in a daily process of negotiation regarding the allocation of workers. The legal status given to works councils gives them the power to delay and obstruct managerial decisions by excessive insistence on legal formalities. Because of this, Opel's management is interested in collaborating with the works council (*pluralist* frame of reference), especially on issues of work organisation (teamwork). Works councils are useful in that they share the responsibilities of decision making and help to make management policies more acceptable to workers.

Every issue is considered very carefully by the works council because workers hold works council-members responsible for decisions made with management.

A number of significant IR issues are regulated in the form of *Betriebsvereinbarungen* or company agreements (BVs). Details are regulated in sec. 77 of the works constitution (BetrVG). Company agreements are used as an indicator of the success of participation. Opel's high number of company agreements is considered a sign of an effective works council (cf. Keller 1993:67). According to BR-convenor Müller (1993) "we have achieved over 250 agreements". These company agreements have a direct and compulsory effect on individual employees (sec. 77); they regulate all matters relating to the establishment. Company agreements that contradict collective agreements are however legally void (Streeck 1984:24). A typical example of a company agreement (BV) regulates that "all works council-member are full-time representatives" (interview: Wink 1993), despite the fact that the works constitution gives them only limited time off. Another company agreement now regulates teamwork and applies to all workers. How work is organised is then, not an issue of regional collective bargaining and therefore it is not regulated by the IGM.

Legal requirements prevent works council-members from moving in the direction of an *adversarial* model (cf. Fürstenberg 1992:789) because conflicts between labour and capital are moved to the arena of regional collective bargaining. On the one hand, it enables unions to act reasonably freely on Opel's plant level, on the other hand, works councils' influence on work reorganisation restricts management from moving towards a macho-management policy.

Opel's workplace representatives, as members of the IGM, put forward lists for the election of the works council. According to works council-member Ziegler (1993) the first priority of Opel's IGM-workplace representatives has been to balance white-collar and blue-collar workers' interest. A balance between German and foreign workers is important also, because if there are not enough foreign workers on the list,

an independent Turkish list would attract many votes; different production areas would not then be represented. IGM also needs to put forward enough candidates from the final assembly line (labour intensive), otherwise workplace representatives from this area would reject the list. Balance is also important between skilled and unskilled production workers. A gender balance is achieved through proportional representation in relation to the female workforce; women are represented in the top 10 on the list. There is also the need to keep a political balance between the *social-democrat* and the *progressive-group*. The *progressive-group* is composed of works council-members who favour a more radical and progressive policy (*conflict oriented pluralism*) and the social-democrats who lean towards a more collaborative *interest mediation*. Even though social-democrats are the strongest group, usually many members of the *progressive-group* are in the first 40 on the list and secure seats on the works council. All groups and unions submit their lists to Opel's election committee and works council elections and workers vote for one of the lists. Elections are essentially, then, *a competition for leadership* Schumpeter (1976); participation in this sense does not provide many opportunities beyond that of voting (Mason 1982:169). Regular elections are held every four years, during the period between March 1 and May 31; voting is held by secret ballot.

Assessments estimate that 80 % of workers participate at works council elections; Opel's election results are at the following level of participation (76 % in 1994). Elections for works council-members are on the basis of *proportional representation*; there are no constituencies and there is no *first-past-the-post* system. The results of the election shows the following breakdown of votes (appendix P1): In 1994, IGM received 86.2 % (1990: 82.9 %), DAG 5.4 % (1990:7.1 %), CMV: 5.4 % (1990: 6.1 %). In 1990 and 1994 the majority voted in favour of IGM; DAG's and CMV's share was reduced in the results in 1990. The two independent Turkish lists received about the same votes in 1994 as in 1990.

On the basis of these election results, Opel's works council is formed, i.e. an institutionalised representation of interests of all its employees is created. All workers at Opel vote as workers (one worker has one vote), not as union members, for one of the lists. The percentage of votes which each list receives is then translated into seats (if there are 50 seats, a list needs at least 2 % of the votes to get one seat on the works council). Therefore, all lists which receive enough votes are entitled to have seats. The distribution of seats according to the 1990 and 1994 elections showed (appendix P2): IGM 43 (1990: 42), DAG: 1 (1990: 2), CMV: 1 (1990: 2), and the Turkish list Silzer-Icin: 0 (1990: 1). Silzer-Icin's failure to receive enough votes to capture one seat at Opel's works council was caused because particular Turkish workers took part in management's early retirement plan for production workers and this resulted in a reduction of Turkish workers at Opel.

Opel's workforce was reduced between 1990 and 1994 and therefore the number of seats on the BV was also reduced (from 47 to 45), despite this IGM managed to receive more seats than before. The results show the dominance of IGM; IGM is able effectively to ignore DAG and CMV, however their working relationship tend to be co-operative.

Since Opel's works council does not have an *imperative mandate* (sec. 42-46 BetrVG), i.e. the works council is not directly dependent on workers, workers influence and participative role is reduced to an election every four years. Opel's works council-members are not only independent during these four years from the direct influence of workers; they enjoy certain protection from direct management influence too; they are guaranteed their level of pay and job grading to ensure the smooth continuation of their working life. They also enjoy special protection against dismissal, i.e. their protection makes it attractive to workers to participate in the works council. However, it also separates works council-members from the workforce by privileging them.

Unlike workplace representatives and stewards, works council-members do not depend on an area or workgroup; they are elected by the workers of the whole plant. However, to be effective, company size is crucial for the existence of a works council. To function properly a works council needs to represent at least 600 workers; below this number works councils are often too small to operate. Opel's works council-members are assigned to geographical or production related areas throughout the plant; these areas vary in size. While there are 1,500 workers with one works council-member at the very labour intensive final assembly; there are other units which also have one works council-member with only 160 workers. There is also one works council-member who is assigned to recycling which allows him little time to represent workers because his work unit is dispersed (appendix P3). On average, one works council-member represents about 750 workers at Opel (appendix P3) but the number of workers varies significantly between different areas inside Opel.

Given the distance between the works council and the workers, a certain inevitable tendency to bureaucratisation can be detected (Keller 1993:71), because of the works council-members lack of direct and daily contact to the workforce and their relative distance this results in the tendency to bureaucratisation rather than representation. During *works-meetings* (Betriebsversammlung) works councils are able to communicate with the whole workforce (BetrVG sec. 42) and the topics discussed can include all matters relating to the plant, for example collective bargaining, IR, economy, etc. These meetings are held once every four months, are not public, but officials of those unions that are represented in the plant and representatives of the employers' association are permitted to attend. Given Opel's relatively large workforce, such meetings are organised in a large hall and discussions are transferred by monitors to other halls. At discussion and presentations during the *works-meeting* (15. July 1993), works council-members prefer to raise such issues as the general economy, business and labour politics (Schuring 1992). Workplace representatives often heavily criticise management during these meetings.

If Batstone et al.'s (1977:45) concept of a *quasi-elite* (a *core-group*) is transferred to Opel, eight works council-members in their head offices are members of this *core-group*, i.e. these members are given strong support by other workers; usually their negotiating skills are high and they have usually proven their skills in defending workers rights. These members are certainly not all members of the *social-democratic* group. At least ten works council-members do not belong to this group, including the works council-convenor and two to three other works council-members in the head office. Most younger works council-members do however belong to the social-democratic group, as this tend to help them to become a works council-member and get a position in head office. They prefer to be associated with the *youth-group*. This group overlaps to some degree with the progressive and with the social-democratic group. Politically, they are more likely to represent the *New German Left* rather than the *Old German Left* (Markovits 1993). Although the deputy works council-convenor is the head of the *social-democratic* group, his successor is from the *progressive-group*. Since the last election and introduction of a new retirement plan accepted by many of the older workers and some works council-members, members of the *New Left* are moving into important positions as the workforce sees them as strong in representing their interests.

Although power is concentrated in the person heading Opel's works council (cf. Keller 1993:71), the deputy convenor has significant input into personnel affairs within the works council and he is head of the *social-democratic* group. According to works council-member Reitingen (1993), "there is no major split on Opel's works council". Richard Heller (former works council-convenor) led the victory in 1975 of the *progressive-group* within IGM over an older, more conservative works council majority. He served as chairman until a few years ago when his deputy Rudolf Müller became convenor. Heller has made it a priority to develop and preserve unity in the works council. This political strategy has been successful, the Heller/Müller team has won every election since 1975 by large majorities (Turner 1991:134).



Opel's works council meets approximately twice per month and its decisions are made through majority voting (Zöllner 1983:420). IGM's works council-members of the *social-democratic* group are in the majority. Although its participation rights are restricted within the company, the works council also has significant external influence since some members of the *social-democratic* group are also on the Rüsselsheim city council. Opel-Rüsselsheim's works council-members are also members of the *Group Works Council (Konzernbetriebsrat)* of other West-German GM plants. Once a year the group-works council meets with Opel's management for the whole of Germany (West). Head of the group-works council is the convenor of the Rüsselsheim works council. Such a group-works council is an organ of the BetrVG (sec. 54). It is responsible for dealing with matters that concern all plants (Bochum, Rüsselsheim, Kaiserslautern) that cannot be regulated by individual works council. Teamwork has been seen as an issue affecting all plants because GM's management and the works council wanted the same model for teamwork in all its operations, even though they accepted that slight divergences will occur in different plants.

Opel-works council's also has links to the local IGM office at Darmstadt, IGM's head office in Frankfurt, to GM-Aspern, and to GM-Saab. Given language difficulties and the national characteristics of IR, etc. Opel's works council has rather loose contacts with other European GM plants, but meets annually with their representatives under the auspices of the *International Metalworkers' Federation*. Contact to other German car manufacturers is regularly organised by IGM (three times per year). According to the advisor to Opel's works council Herber (1993), "in February 1992, a European Community support meeting of European GM representatives took place for the first time". The *economic-committee (Wirtschaftsausschuß)* is one of the main information provider for the works council. Management has to inform works councils of business plans at an early stage (sec. 106 BetrVG). Unlike the works council, which consists only of workers, the *economic-committee* is a permanent joint committee. According to sec. 106 BetrVG, the *economic-committee* is not a decision-making body because it does not have co-decision-making powers in any business area (Keller 1993:69).

In the daily life of companies, workers tend to view works councils as part of their union representation (Müller-Jentsch 1986:228) although works councils are not permitted to use their office for union affairs. In practice, this rule is hardly enforced. All of Opel's works council-members also have union positions (sec. 74 BetrVG). However, during any strike, works council-members can support a strike to a significant degree, works council-members can participate as union members but not as works council-members. IGM takes a leading role in strikes, but at times when there are no strikes, unions are not allowed to endanger *the spirit of mutual trust* between works councils and management. The union's advice to works councils can extend codetermination and participation rights by confirming additional rights in regional collective bargaining between IGM and the employer federation. Such extensions of participation rights for works council can be additional forms of representation, i.e. speakers of workgroups (Hanau and Adomait 1986:113). In other words, while unions and employer's federations could have introduced a speaker of a workgroup (similar to a teamspeaker) through regional collective bargaining, they did not do so at the level of regional or national collective bargaining.

Works Councils themselves can be located in different positions in the triadic concept of *unitarism, pluralism, adversarialism*. Kotthoff (1982) has described seven types of works councils: 1) A *respected works councils* who is acknowledged by management; the latter however still makes all important decisions, 2) a *respected and stable works council* in large companies, 3) a *co-operative strong and independent works council* which is in a position to effect decisions by management, 4) a *management's works council*-(often in small and medium companies), i.e. management controlled 5) an *isolated BR* often found in sizeable companies which has neither good contacts to management nor to union, 6) an *ignored works council*, i.e. one that is ignored on a personal basis and is to be found mostly in small companies with a high level of skilled workers (Keller 1993:75), 7) a *class-war works council* (Müller-Jentsch 1986:226), which not only recruits new union members, but also demonstrates a large degree of

working with workplace representatives and one which feels itself to be accountable to workplace representatives (Schmidt and Trinczek 1991:184). These seven forms of BR can be incorporated into the triadic frame of reference:

Table 5.5.: The Three Frames of Reference & Kotthoff's Typology

<i>unitarist</i>	<i>pluralist</i>				<i>adversarial</i>
6 5	4 1	2	3		7

Most types of works councils however work fall within a the *pluralist* frame of reference. Kotthoff's number 7 applies to the *adversarial frame* of reference; his no. 5 and no. 6 are closer to the *unitarist* frame of reference. Consequently, most works council are part of an institutionalised forms of IR largely because of the legislative framework which requires them to remain within a pluralistic system. However, if a works council does not participate in management's decision, it can become a vehicle for a management approach (*unitarist* frame of reference). However, even Japanese companies operating in Germany have recognised works councils and their demands for participation. As for Opel's works council, no. 2 (Kotthoff) would apply because it is a) *respected and stable* and located in a large company, and b) it is also a *co-operative strong and independent works council*; it holds a position in which decisions by management can only be made with works council co-operation. Opel' works council is a combination of number 2 and 3, which makes it even more powerful, because it adds stability to power.

#### b) Opel's workplace representatives

One of the problems for representational structures at Opel is that the distance between the works council-member and workers can be considerable, i.e. on average only 750 workers to one works council-member must inevitably mean a reduction of democratic functions. While the size of the "*constituency*" of a works council-member is large, workplace representatives on the other hand are much closer to their workgroups. According to Opel's VP-convenor Ziegler (1993), the size of a constituency varies; it can take anything between 15 and 90, but is between 15 and 30 in most

cases with an average of about 25. This improves the degree of democratic participation given to each worker. Between 25 and 50 workplace representatives elect one section- or departmental *Blocky* (*Blockvertrauensperson*). On average there are 30 workplace representatives in an area to one works council-member, but the size of a workplace representatives' constituency can vary between 8 and 55 (appendix P4). In other words, a typical production area has 750 workers and is represented by one works council-member, one or two *Blockies* and 30 workplace representatives. IGM (1980:6) puts forward 5 to 20 workers for every election of workplace representatives. All workplace representatives in one company constitute a *VP Body* which elects a VK-Committee. According to the VKL-convenor Ziegler (1993) Opel's VKL has 14 members, one of whom is elected as convenor, s/he is usually also a works council-member. Since Opel's departments are very large, there is a middle level (*Blockies*) who function between workplace representatives-committee and workplace representatives. There are 64 *Blockies*, i.e. a ratio of 1.5 to one works council-member. Opel has approximately 1,000 workplace representatives. Schmidt and Trinczek (1991:181) claim that attendance at workplace representatives' meetings is sometimes very low and that they are run by works council-members. In most cases, approximately 20 to 25 workplace representatives attend Opel's VP-meetings, which are officially run by *Blockies*, but often governed by the works council-member. Works council-member Reitingner (1993) notes, that works council-members play an important role in such meetings because they report to works council-committees, etc. *Blockies* also have regular meetings, which, according to Ziegler (1993), take place every two months. In contrast to most works council-meetings, *Blocky*-meetings deal largely with trade union issues.

On the basis of their relative distance to the workplace, works council-members work often with other workplace representatives on related issues. As far as teamwork is concerned, Opel's works council was not able to support management's request without consulting and gaining the approval of workplace representatives, i.e. 64 *Blockies*. Although the works council took the final decision and negotiated with management,

VPs' opinions were also a crucial factor. Even though workplace representatives are a powerful group, employer associations always reject union claims to recognise workplace representatives (Keller 1993:81). It seems remarkable that German unions have never reached a collective bargaining agreement with employers regarding the role of these workplace representatives (Schmidt and Trinczek 1991:172), therefore, workplace representatives remain go-betweens (Adams & Rummel 1977:19); or arms of the works councils (Koopmann 1984:411). Certainly the 35-hour-week strike at Opel in 1984 illustrates the strength of workplace representatives. They organised the strike which was called by IGM.

The relationship between Opel's works council and workplace representatives could in general be defined as co-operative; Opel's workplace representatives support the works council, but the works council depends to a large extent on workplace representatives as they are drawn up on the election lists for works council elections; this gives workplace representatives a powerful position over works councils. Given these factors, workplace representatives are almost as strong as British stewards in their representative functions.

## 5.2.5. Conclusions

Most workplace representatives could be described as having a more radical (*adversarial*) style compared to works council-members who tend towards a *pluralist* frame of reference. Even amongst the *Blockies* for whom mediation is the key, there is a small sub-group of *Blockies*, who strongly tend towards an *adversarial* approach. The majority of *Blockies*, however, as well as the workplace representatives come from the *social-democratic* group and see themselves as *pluralists*:

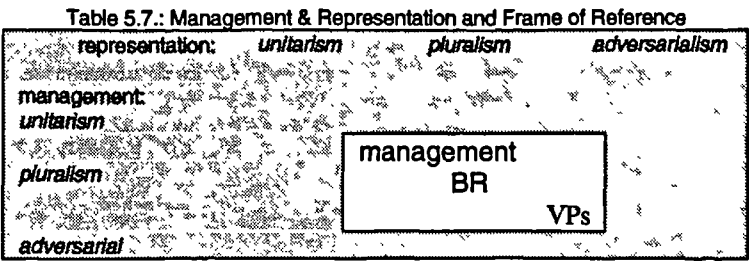
Table 5.6.: BR, VPs, Blockies &amp; The Three Frames of Reference

<i>unitarism</i>	<i>pluralism</i>	<i>adversarial</i>
	majority of BR-members <i>social-democratic group</i> <i>progressive group</i> <i>New Left</i>	
	majority of VP committee <i>social-democratic group</i> <i>progressive group</i> <i>New Left</i>	
	majority of Blockies <i>social-democratic group</i> <i>progressive group</i> <i>New Left</i>	
	majority of VPs <i>social-democratic group</i> <i>progressive group</i> <i>New Left</i>	

Although all levels of representation (works council, VKL, *Blockies*, workplace representatives) can be further set in a political framework as *social-democrats* or a *progressives* or the *New Left*, none of these groups fight internally. The IR approach of all these groups is fundamentally oriented towards a *pluralist* frame of reference. None of the groups departs from a *pluralist* frame of reference. Opel's structure of representation results in unification in the interests of a common policy. Possible sources of conflict are between the *Blockies* and the works council because most *Blockies* tend to be *adversarial* to management, while the majority of the works council is not.

Representation through Opel's works council structure is at the most important level; although workplace representatives have direct input from the shopfloor, they do not have enough power to significantly influence the works council, except in the case of works council elections, when workplace representatives do have real influence over shaping the list. However at Opel the most significant form of representation is formed above the level of shopfloor workgroups and even above sections or departments. Real decision-making power is assigned to the works council far more than the workgroup unit, and this can act to remove real representation from the shopfloor and displace it to a more bureaucratic if stable body. However, as the case of small unofficial strikes have shown, *Blockies* and workplace representatives do have the power to act outside the works council's influence. Opel's works council is however usually strong enough to make the *Blockies* and the workplace representatives operate within the *pluralist* frame of reference as the case of some unofficial strikes have shown.

Consequently, Opel's structure of representation demonstrates an interesting power-play between different groups and their different levels of representation. The relationship between Opel's workplace representatives, works council-members and *Blockies* can be shown as a matrix using the following frame of reference:



Neither Opel's management nor the works council can afford not to mediate or negotiate with each other. Even during a small scale strike in Opel's paint shop organised by workplace representative and *Blockies*, the works council moved both back to a position of mediation. It seems that neither works council nor management is interested in moving outside a *pluralist* frame of reference. However, both sides can operate satisfactorily within the *pluralist* frame of reference sometimes leaning towards a more *unitarist* approach (management) at other times tending towards a more *adversarial* approach (workplace representatives and *Blockies*).

### 5.3. Comparative Conclusions

It is vital to note that no part of the German *dual system* operates in isolation. All parts of the system depend on each other in many ways. The term dual system is used to describe two clear aspects of the system: a) one based on law, the other b) based on trade union's organisation and representation. While the union based system of workplace representatives is legally legitimised, it is important because it provides works councils with a recruiting ground for new works council-member. Many examples demonstrate how both systems complement each other and create a direct say for workplace representatives.

In contrast to British IR, Germany's IR is characterised by relatively centralised collective bargaining at the industrial level. Unlike British stewards, German works councils and workplace representatives are faced with "organised" collective bargaining, because the mode of participation is highly regulated by the law. This means that British stewards can move towards an *adversarial frame* of reference quickly when faced with a *adversarial* situation created by management. Legal requirements prevent the development of an *adversarial frame* of reference for the German works councils and workplace representatives. British stewards' committees and German works councils sometimes appear to carry out similar activities. However, such parallels must be drawn carefully as there are some very important differences. While works councils are strongly *pluralist* in approach, the other has a wider range of choices. In Germany strikes are outlawed for works councils, works councils are regulated, protected and are constrained by a large body of case law and legal statutes (cf. a *pluralism*), on the other hand the British shop stewards system is constructed by *voluntarism* and *customs and practice* based on the power of workgroups on the shopfloor.

Whereas participation as a principle that is legally enshrined combined with a policy of reconciliation and mutual trust are central to the German system, British IR has no



legal base to its system of participation. There is no strong force which drives shop stewards at Vauxhall towards a *pluralist* frame of reference, in fact, in terms of survival they see an *adversarial frame* of reference as most advantageous for workers.

The main characteristics of IR in both countries, i.e. their dominant and distinctive features, seem to have been established at a fairly early stage of industrial development:

Table 5.8.: The Historical Development of Stewards and BRs/VPs

frames of reference	<i>unitarism</i>	<i>pluralism</i>	<i>adversarialism</i>
FRG:	VPs before 1919	BR after 1920 until now	VPs in 1918/19
		VPs after World War II until now	
UK:		Stewards since early industrialisation	

In contrast to German workplace representatives, German works councils have influence over social issues but again their influence is limited in relationship to business affairs. Although works councils' activities are legally regulated, workplace representatives have a wide range of responsibilities. German workplace representatives (VPs) can be compared with stewards:

Table 5.9.: Stewards and Workplace Representatives

GB: Stewards	Germany: VPs
(Coates & Topham 1988:157; Partridge 1977:32)	(Koopmann 1984)
spokesman of the workgroup	
disseminator of information between the organisation and the group	inform union members concerning union policies, inform union members about resolutions of union committees
minor bargaining over grievances	advise BR before signing works-agreements
monitoring of information	inform union members about collective agreements
exercising leadership to strengthen cohesion & bargaining power	encourage union members to discuss union issues, organise, participate, and carry out industrial action
liaison with other groups & managers	
decision-making	
formal negotiation with senior managers	

German workplace representatives and British stewards are similar in some areas, both act as a link between union organisation and members, and they also both share the role of monitoring information and agreements. By contrast while strikes are organised by unions outside a company in Germany, in Britain such an action is more likely to come from within and be motivated from the bottom up. While formal negotiations with senior management is not a function of workplace representatives in Germany but is allocated to the works council, British stewards do have the ability to negotiate on collective issues directly as spokesperson of their group; this is not men-

tioned by Koopmann as part of a workplace representatives' function at Opel. In Germany, although workplace representatives are elected by their group and they do clearly represent a group of workers, the structure of representation does not actively depend on this link between workgroup and workplace representatives. Whereas in Britain, this link is crucial for an understanding of the representative system.

Structures of representation in both countries include unions and, in formal terms, both have a multi-union system. However at Opel, although DAG and CMV both exist as well as IGM, they are insignificant. Given the power of IGM, it may not be appropriate to speak of a real multi-union system because representation is dominated by them. In contrast to this, Vauxhall has a real multi-union system, with a balance of power between the two dominant unions. While IGM at Opel is the only union with workplace representatives and holds almost all works council seats, Vauxhall's TGWU has 2,349 members, AEEU has 1,524, and MSF has 380. While IGM clearly dominates workplace representative and BR, AEEU has 72 stewards, TGWU has 71, and MSF has 11; all have a degree of autonomy within this structure and can influence union policies. While TGWU's stewards are the *core-group* on the shopfloor, IGM's workplace representatives and works councils are in a similar position without having to take any other union into account. However relations between Vauxhall's unions are problematic; TGWU is not only the strongest union but also forms the *core-group* and is often able to convince MSF and AEEU to follow its policies. Even though in both Germany and England unions tend to operate separately, they all depend on their stewards/workplace representatives, who in turn depend on their workgroup for power. The following graph shows the distance between a workgroup or workers and their representatives:

Table 5.10: Ratio between Workers and Representation in GB and FRG

Country	No.	Representative	represents no. of workers
FRG	one	works council -member	750
FRG	one	workplace representative	25
GB	one	shop stewards	32

Although the size of a workplace representatives' constituency can vary between 15 to 90 and, usually, has 25 on average, stewards can represent between 50 and 60 members; a typical steward's constituency at Vauxhall is 32 members. Although VPs' and stewards' constituencies are about the same size, their influence differs significantly. The German structure of representation is not based on the workgroup; while the workgroup is the key element in British representation.

Since typologies are very important in comparative analysis and one typology is the German *seeking harmony* (*Ordnungsfaktor*) and the *independent opposition* (*Gegenmacht*) model, Vauxhall's stewards can be seen as closer to the *Gegenmacht* model operating somewhere between the *Ordnungsfaktor* and *Gegenmacht* model, while the works council tends towards the *Ordnungsfaktor*. Using Batstone's model of a *quasi-elite*; the *core-group* in Vauxhall is a group of determined and strong TGWU-stewards who lead the workforce. However, Opel's *core-group* is difficult to determine. Firstly, can be found within the IGM; secondly, *Blockies* can form a *core-group* with considerable influence, thirdly Opel's *core-group* can also be inside the works council because of its major role in decision-making; fourthly, within Opel's works council there are two political groups, i.e. the *social-democratic* and the *progressive-group*, who also exert their influence as a *core-group*. On the basis of Kotthoff's typology, Opel's works council combines number 2 and 3, while Vauxhall's *core-group*, i.e. TGWU convenor and several stewards is a combination of 3 and 7.

Table 5.11.: Kotthoff's Typology & Frame of Reference

<i>unitarism</i>	<i>pluralism</i>			<i>adversarialism</i>
6 5	4 1	2	3	7
	Opel's BR			
	AEEU			TGWU

As Vauxhall's model for teamwork shows, any change in work organisation could only be made with the TGWU's stewards approval. The stewards see themselves to a much lesser degree as *co-operative*, but as in a strong and independent position, i.e. number 7, (class war). Compared to the wide range of possible IR approaches at Vauxhall, the range of IR approaches for Opel's works council is much narrower.

While works councils play an important role in managerial decision making, Vauxhall's TGWU's approach is very different, because they generally oppose management and management itself does not function within a *pluralist* frame of reference:

Table 5.12.: The Frame of Reference: Vauxhall and Opel

<i>unitarism</i>	<i>pluralism</i>	<i>adversarialism</i>
	Opel's BR	Opel's VPs
	AEEU	TGWU

Opel's and Vauxhall's structures of representation demonstrates one group operating within the *pluralist* approach and another group sometimes with a *pluralist* and at other times an *adversarial* approach. However, the crucial element for both is, that Batstone's *quasi-elite* or *core-group* differs in Germany from Britain. While in Germany, the question of a *core-group* is distributed through institutionalised forms of the system, in Britain a voluntary group within the TGWU is the *core-group*, i.e. the shop stewards. The German system operates with top-down representation, separating representatives from the workforce through a strict legal system, while in Britain workers participate at workgroup level; they are kept down and their powers are often restricted by management but they also draw their representative power from the bottom, i.e. the worker's themselves.

Table 5.13.: Management, Representation and Frames of Reference

representation	<i>unitarism</i>	<i>pluralism</i>	<i>adversarialism</i>
management			
<i>unitarism</i>			
<i>pluralism</i>	Vauxhall's management Opel's management Opel's BR Vauxhall's quasi-elite		
<i>adversarialism</i>			

Opel's works council has a good relationship with management, because it has an independent legal basis (the works constitution), which provides enough power for it not to be incorporated into management and which also forces both sides to negotiate (e.g. the works council forced management to accept the election of teamspeakers). The legal strength of works councils in Germany protected workers representative

systems throughout the recession much better than other systems of indirect participation where "weak labour is integrated into managerial decision making in a decidedly subordinate way" (Turner 1991:13). However at Vauxhall this did not happen; in fact the opposite happened and at Opel workers maintained their traditional strength. The other basis for workers' representation is the independent union IGM, which although it operates largely outside the plant strengthens the works council (BR). Workplace representatives do not provide a significant power base for the structure of representation, although they do play an important part. Crucial to the structure of representation at Opel is not the workgroup, because at an important level, neither Blockies nor works councils depend on the workgroup. In contrast to this, the workgroup is the sole unit of worker's power in Vauxhall's union representation.

**Chapter**

# 6

## **Teamwork & Representation**

## 6. Teamwork and the Structure of Representation

Both, Vauxhall and Opel introduced teamwork into an existing structure of representation in 1992 and both plants started the planning period for this move in the early 1990s. Once it was decided that teamwork should be introduced on the shopfloor on a permanent basis, it inevitably meant a reorganisation of traditional shopfloor organisation. Teamwork replaced the old worker-supervisor structure with one in which workers did not have to answer directly to supervisors, but to teams and teamleaders. Representatives at Vauxhall and Opel were fully involved by management during the introduction period. Despite this, the different IR systems in Luton and Rüsselsheim, the IR system tended to influence the introduction of teamwork in different ways.

To examine the effects of teamwork on the existing structure of representation, two typical plants have been compared with each other because each of them have characteristics of an *adversarial* or pluralist nature. The basic IR systems in each plant not only affected the introduction of teamwork, but also the actual structure of teamwork itself. The IR system of each plant influenced issues like the election or appointment of teamleaders/teamspeakers, leadership styles, competencies, the question of autonomy, etc. Even though a *pluralist* structure of representation is to some degree defined by law in Germany, the traditional representative system at Opel was affected by the introduction of teamwork. At Vauxhall, the *adversarial* state of IR was also affected by the introduction of teamwork. Despite the differences of each IR approach, both Vauxhall and Opel were able to introduce teamwork in very different ways and with very different approaches from management and unions.

## 6.1. Teamwork and the Structure of Representation at Vauxhall

According to Vauxhall's manager Knapman (1994), teams at Vauxhall were set up with on average of about eight members. Teams took responsibility for quality, output, inspection, repair, cleanliness and some maintenance, they tended to share jobs, and to improve the way work was done. Managers however emphasised a cultural change in IR associated with the introduction of teamwork. Manual workers would no longer be just a *pair of hands* or *leave their brains at the gate*, they would have greater responsibilities and more status because of these responsibilities. This cultural change in terms of the status of the workers is emphasised in union/management agreements (Carr 1994:203).

### 6.1.1. Teams, Teamwork & Leadership

Teamwork was introduced into plants that operated with traditional Fordist/Taylorist production pattern. Often these teams do not work as teams, because they rarely communicate with each other during production, therefore such working pattern could be described as "working in a *loose grouping*" or *Arbeit im Raumverband* (Kirsch 1993:19). A distinction between *teams* and *workgroups* (Katzenbach & Smith 1993) needs to be made. Vauxhall's teams are in fact more like *workgroups*; they have the strong and clear leadership that characterises *workgroups*. As teamleaders hold a special position, the following sort of leadership applies to teamleadership as well as management styles (Smith et al. 1984:176): 1) *The teamleader tells*, 2) *sells*, 3) *tests*, 4) *consults*, or 5) *joins*. Since Vauxhall's teamleaders do not depend on a vote from their teams, their loyalty is not directed primarily towards the team, rather to management (hypothesis: C). Therefore, they generally adapt a *tells* style. On the basis of their relationship to management the majority of Vauxhall's teamleaders prefer a *sell* or *test* style; the *consult* style is used less than the *join* style; among all teamleaders



participating in interviews the latter style was the most rare. Most teamleaders can afford to adapt the first four leadership styles but, given their direct mandate from management, the *teamleader-team* relationship is authoritarian and *adversarial* because of its non-participative nature. Teams and teamleaders see themselves on opposing sides. Despite the fragmentary nature of teams, team-members are held to be individually accountable; teams tend to run meetings effectively but their discussions are then assessed by others. In summary, Vauxhall' teams are more like *workgroups* than teams. However, the Vauxhall management prefers to label them *teams* hoping this will create a psychological commitment and coherence within the group, i.e. a culture that will benefit management. The existence of teamleaders does represent clearly a new player on the shopfloor. Gulowsen's scale (1979) for measuring autonomy is useful for measuring the degree of autonomy given to teams:

Table 6.1.: Team Autonomy at Vauxhall

	no participation	participation	co-decision-making	autonomy
1	teamleader selection			
2	new members in teams			
3			distribution of work	
4	time flexibility			
5		acceptance of additional work		
6		representation outside a team, either via supervisor or direct		
7		methods of production		
8	production goals (output)			
9	production goals (quality)			

According to this table, management maintains those functions which are seen as management's role or as the *right to manage*, on many crucial issues. Only on the level of 5, 6, and 7 does management allow teams to *participate*. Since distribution of work within a team is one of the central issues for teamwork, management gives teams the level of *co-decision-making* at a certain level. In none of the nine items on Gulowsen's scale are teams given full autonomy. Since management reserves most of the functions measured by Gulowsen's scale firmly in its area of responsibility, management's *right to manage* has not shifted from an *adversarial frame* of reference; i.e. it is essentially *adversarial*, i.e. imposed from above and controlled by one side.

## 6.1.2. Stewards and the Introduction of Teamwork

Vauxhall's teamwork at Ellesmere Port began with a new agreement and a wage supplement of 5 %. The agreement urged unions at Luton to make a similar deal to achieve the additional 5 % (Carr 1994:200). In contrast to the TGWU, the AEEU accepted management's proposal wholesale, while TGWU-stewards modified and discussed the agreement with the union membership on five Saturdays in 1992. Membership meetings took place outside the plant and up to 100 people attended. IBC' TGWU-stewards attended also. Step by step, the new proposals were discussed and alterations were made. The final proposal was approved through a ballot of members of all the unions in September 1992. The election had a high turnout and the proposal was accepted by a 2,5:1 majority for AEEU; 51 % of TGWU's members agreed and according to MSF-convenor Payne (1993), "87 % of MSF's members voted in favour of *Working Together to Win*. To the TGWU-Convenor John Jack (1992), the voting in his union TGWU showed that:

- 
- the membership were aware of the problems that teamwork could bring to the workers,
  - the TGWU membership was reluctant to approve the concept of teamwork.
- 

Through meetings and discussions, the TGWU, more so than the AEEU and MSF, made their members aware of the implications of teamwork. As a result, TGWU-members voted with a narrow margin for the acceptance of the agreement, demonstrating that the TGWU membership held a critical view on the introduction of teamwork. --

With the introduction of teamwork, management wanted to change parts of the representational arrangement to improve IR in it's favour. However, the failure of management to modify or share it's responsibilities of planning and organising and it's determination not to devolve any significant responsibility or power to the teams is

wholly characteristic of an *adversarial* management style, i.e. one that fears the destruction of its own powers. On the other hand, management did recognise the unions' right to represent the interests of, and communicate with its members on these issues (Vauxhall 1992:11) and in this sense seemed to move in the direction of a pluralist approach. Management then proposed that unions should speak with one voice through the JPC (Carr 1994:202). As Jack (1994) noted: "According to the agreement, management expressed the intention of improving IR in the plant". This committee was composed of 17 members from management, AEEU, MSF and TGWU; it was held on a monthly basis and unions agreed to attend. The TGWU more than the AEEU saw the JPC as an attempt to incorporate unions into management's agenda. Management's authoritarian style, the way it handled these meetings confirmed this suspicion as far as the TGWU were concerned. From the union's point of view the JPC was a management device to impose their own plans (i.e. *adversarial*) and was merely a pretence at pluralism. Management, on the other hand, was incapable of going beyond a *us and them* attitudes in order to build confidence in a pluralist approach.

While management agreed to unions and stewards having time off for representation, in practice the situation at the door-section was rather different, because stewards who were not team-members were not allowed to attend other team-meetings. They could do so only if union members requested their attendance; significantly stewards did not attend any team-meeting during the introducing period between October 1992 and January 1993 and therefore were excluded from participating. Such exclusion fed into the nature of later (*adversarial*) reactions. However, in 1994 shop stewards were able to attend their own team-meetings, a fact which contradicts the agreement made with management.

Besides stewards' right to represent, unions discussed the emergence of teamleaders. Long before voting on the agreement, "the unions were concerned that the creation of a new grade of teamleader, in larger numbers than existing stewards, could result in

many problems being resolved without reference to the stewards, resulting in a loss of status for the unions as a whole" (Carr 1994:203). However, all the unions fought to ensure that teamleaders did not interfere with the representative powers of the stewards. Some teamleaders however had a tendency to see themselves as engaging in a new form of supervisory role (hypothesis D). According to AEEU-convenor Longley (1994), "out of the 543 teamleaders, approximately 100 (mostly AEEU-teamleaders) identified themselves as part of management and wanted to join the MSF (supervisor's) union". Eric Payne (MSF-convenor) denies that this was the case. All teamleaders remained in their former union (AEEU or TGWU), even after changing their job title and description. Vauxhall did not have mixed teams, which kept the traditional splits between skilled and unskilled unions open. While seeming to ask for a common union policy, the way that teamwork was developed, particularly in terms of each union organising their own teams, meant in practice, little real commonality developed between the TGWU and the AEEU. This was reflected in the widening of the gap in their attitudes during the whole process of teamwork introduction.

By the end of 1994, Vauxhall operated with 543 teamleaders and 154 stewards, i.e. a 1:3,5 ratio between teamleaders and stewards. In terms of numbers, workers were closer to their teamleader than to a steward, because each team was smaller than a steward's constituency. It seems as if management did reduce the strength of shop stewards through the introduction of teamleaders by setting stewards against both supervisors and teamleaders. In the survey, 10 % of the workers saw their teamleader as representative of their interests (cf. chapter 6.2.3.). Since supervisors are hardly regarded as representatives, it could be argued that without teamleaders, not 82 % saw their stewards as representative, but 92 %. To respond to teamwork, the TGWU made it's stewards aware of the following principles (Batton & Reid 1991:28):

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1. Continually to monitor the effects on trade union organisation. 2. 'Push' the role of stewards. 3. Keep persuading the company that they cannot succeed without a healthy union presence. 4. Go for as many 'joint' activities as they can. There is no such thing as an 'independent' survey. We want to push for joint control, and joint questions. 5. Quality Circles become boring and run out of ideas, 'nice-guy' teamleaders revert to being authoritarian foremen, etc. Look out for opportunities to re-assert the role of the steward. 6. Oppose 'formality'. It is phoney. Use formality to protect established procedures and the role of the union. 7. Keep up your information and education campaign.

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These instructions demonstrate the degree of fear that the unions experienced of the new team structure. They saw them as a strategy to usurp power from the traditional representational structure built by workers. Before teamwork was introduced, TGWU-stewards discussed their future role in a teamwork system. They tried to strengthen the role of their stewards in the area of production; stewards were trained and educated about teamwork. Any attempts by management to reinforce the role of teamleaders as a management role were rejected by the unions.

According to the AEEU-convenor Longley (1994), unions and management are aware that about "20 % of teamleaders think they are managers". Not only in the AEEU did teamleaders move in the direction of management, TGWU's convenor Jack (1994) also made the point that teamleaders are expected to do a supervisory job without receiving proper remuneration or reward for that job; unions considered the marginal pay as inadequate. For the unions this meant again that management were redefining jobs and expecting more from workers without recognising this through the union and the pay structure. The recruitment of some stewards to teamleaders was also seen as a loss by the unions of their own representatives. As AEEU's convenor Longley (1994) stated: "We lost 8 stewards who became teamleaders" and TGWU's convenor Jack (1993) estimated that: "The TGWU lost three stewards, who were appointed by the company for the position of teamleader and the AEEU lost among 12 to 15". Carr (1994:203) noted: "To the major unions' embarrassment, a significant number of stewards applied to become teamleaders, and most were accepted. Sixteen AEEU Engineering Section stewards and a smaller number of TGWU-stewards be-

came teamleaders". For the union those shop stewards who became teamleaders were falling for a management strategy to weaken the union. Given the small number of 150 stewards, the loss as a result of this remained at approximately 10 %. Unions sought to keep their structures intact by not losing too many stewards to management. The attempt to keep stewards on their side clearly shows the unions' interest in maintaining a clear boundary between them and management, but also the desire to maintain an *adversarial frame* of reference rather than be led into a *unitarist* frame of reference disguised as *pluralism*.

Not only were the AEEU and TGWU able to keep the loss of stewards at a reasonable level, they also successfully dealt with the introduction of teamwork, teamleaders and other related initiatives. According to Batton and Reid (1991) "A management strategy based on issues of teamwork did include an attack on unionism":

Table 6.2.: Techniques and TGWU

Management Techniques	TGWU's response at Vauxhall
<b>De-valuing the steward:</b> 1) Changing the role of supervision, 2) Involving employees. 3) 'Team' organisation.	Management changed the role of supervision and gave teamleader more power leading to conflicts between them and stewards. Although direct employee involvement was rare, teamwork resulted in problems for stewards in some areas of the plant.
<b>Changing the climate:</b> 1) Information as a directed weapon. 2) Selection and vetting.	Through supervisors-teamleader meetings, stewards at the door-section were effectively by-passed.
<b>Individualising workers:</b> 1) Appraisal etc./merit rating. 2) Individual contracts etc.	Neither merit rating, nor individual contracts are introduced at Vauxhall. A process of individualisation cannot be detected.

Teamwork certainly was seen by the unions as a management threat; Vauxhall's unions however attempted to secure their own position not by rejecting teamwork, but by shaping the teamwork agreement. They rejected some initiatives but managed to shape core elements of teamwork. Although "the major unions were suspicious of teamwork" (Carr 1994:203), they adapted teamwork. This strategy was one of *damage limitation* (Carr 1994:202). Unions that were forced to secure their existence and position by using a policy of *damage limitation* were not really moving towards pluralism, they saw themselves rather defending their own interests against a hostile plan

conceived by management. They felt that they were forced to remain *adversarial* to secure their very existence. Not surprisingly, Vauxhall's TGWU tried to follow a strategy developed by the union's head office to respond to teamwork:

Table 6.3.: TGWU Strategies and Activities at Vauxhall

TGWU Strategy	Activities at Vauxhall
1. A clear role for the steward: Make sure 'teams' do not remove the stewards' role.	With the decision for a mutual exclusion of a steward's post and teamleader, Vauxhall's trade unions ensured the sole membership representation through stewards.
2. Keep formality and 'rigid' agreements and procedures: You will be encouraged to be 'informal' - but you need to keep agreements and procedures in place. Ask the company whether its system of financial, legal and ownership, and control system is 'informal'.	Vauxhall's management and unions reached a formal agreement to introduce teamwork. Attempts by management to informally change the role of teamleaders were rejected by unions on the basis of the written agreement, which specifies the role of teamleaders.
3. Break the link between 'teams and company survival'	Although the unions see Vauxhall can survive without teamwork, the membership clearly sees a link between both as expressed in the survey.
4. Widen the debate on 'quality': what does it really mean? What about our interpretation of 'quality'? (Investment, control, information, etc.)	Quality was not an issue for Vauxhall's unions during the period of the research, because management kept the issue in their area of responsibility.
5. Membership awareness:	Already before the introduction of teamwork, the TGWU organised meetings with all members to discuss teamwork and the narrow vote in favour for the agreement clearly states the awareness of the membership.
6. Strengthen union links outside the company: Do not accept an identification of the union as only in that company - keep links with trade unionists in other companies and with your wider union organisation. You may need them.	During the introduction of teamwork, Vauxhall's unions strengthen their links to unions outside the company (IBC, FORD, etc.). Links to the education department of the TGWU improved due to training programs for teamwork run by the TGWU.

Although Vauxhall's unions were in a difficult position throughout the early 1990s, they managed to maintain their existence as an independent body of representation and ensured that most of the TGWU's goals were met. Union policies during the introduction of teamwork could best be described as: (a) damage limitation, (b) maintaining an independent representation, (c) maintaining the number of stewards, (d) shaping rather than rejecting the introduction of teamwork. Since the bargaining power of unions was significantly reduced in the 1990s, neither the AEEU nor the TGWU was able to wholly reject management's strategies for teamwork so a compromise was felt to be inevitable. The unions adapted a defensive approach to teamwork by trying to maintain their independence and not to be *incorporated* into management's version of teamwork.

### 6.1.3. Teamleader, Teams and Representation

After the introduction of teamwork, the number of stewards was linked to the number of supervisors and not to the number of teamleaders. Unions discussed the management claim that the number of stewards should be linked to the number of teamleaders. This however, was strongly rejected by the unions as a central management attack on their system and the number of stewards was kept at the existing level; there is now one shop stewards to every 2.5 teams. The TGWU-deputy-convenor Garcia (1994) stated, that "teamwork is a question of control, either we or the teamleader controls". This again demonstrates an *adversarial frame* of reference to the basic IR issues. Control however, the unions felt might be difficult to maintain; unions feared exclusion as there were only a few shop stewards within the teamwork system. According to a TGWU-steward Sullivan (1993) teamleaders became more influential than shop stewards because "attendance was moved from a clock-in system to attendance control by the teamleader thus the teamleader gained more power". Teamleaders undermined the shop stewards system not only by outnumbering stewards, but also because teamleaders again increased their powers. TGWU-steward Garcia (1994) views the question of power in the following way: "If you have a strong steward, you have a weak teamleader and if you have a weak steward, you have a strong teamleader". However it is important also to remember that a large number of teams have no shop steward presence to control the teamleaders' power.

In the door-section at Vauxhall, where teamleaders were in a particularly strong position, "teams wanted to control the moves of the teamleader" (Sullivan 1993). However this proved difficult given the backing of the supervisor for the teamleader. Besides their numbers and their increased power, TGWU's convenor Jack (1994) viewed the teamleaders' attack on stewards in the following way: "In theory, supervisors and teamleaders can work together against stewards, but in practice this has not happened yet". In contrast to this statement events at the door-section demonstrated the oppo-



site; the supervisor, in alliance with the teamleader, was successfully able to by-pass stewards from the AEEU and the TGWU. Jack (1994) admits, that "we have teamwork, on the whole we can control it, but there are a few sections where teamleaders have established control over stewards". In other words, there are conflicts between teamleaders and stewards in some sections and potential for conflict within the new structure. However, on the whole, TGWU's representatives claim that they are in control of teamwork. Management, on the other hand, by establishing a more diverse system of representation feels that they have broken down and dispersed the oppositional structure of the union particularly when some shop stewards (AEEU and TGWU) begin to shift allegiance from the union to an identification or *loyalty* to management. With teamleaders and their assigned tasks, shopfloor management has changed (hypothesis a):

*Whether a teamleader is appointed, or not a teamleader will be a new player within the participative framework (industrial democracy) on the shopfloor.*

Vauxhall's managers see teamworking as a crucial step in changing the culture of the shopfloor, and "believe that the concept has been willingly accepted by employees, though acknowledging that it takes time to set up" (Carr 1994:204). According to the TGWU (Batton and Reid 1991:20), the difference between the old supervisor-worker system and the new *teamleader-system* is:

Table 6.4.: Old and New IR

Traditional IR system:	New Style IR:
Steward by-passes supervisor	Power increased by <i>Team Briefing</i> and merit rating
Supervisor of little importance	Stripping Stewards functions

While under the old system stewards were almost able to run shopfloor management, the teamleader system bought management control back to the shopfloor. Team briefings provided another form of control of workers because they gave management direct communication access through the teamleader to the workers. As the supervisor's function shifted towards a teamleader, their role was viewed by a TGWU-

steward on the door-section as "like corporals, because they do the dirty work for management" (Sullivan 1993). Hypothesis (e):

*Whether or not a teamleader is appointed, a new form of control of workers on the shopfloor may result.*

The power of teamleaders, then, can lead to the exclusion of independent worker's representation; it can also weaken their ability to defend themselves against management's control. One of the important defences against management's control, the steward's network (Batstone et al. 1977:70) has been increasingly challenged by teamleaders who have enough time off to set up their own network of communications. Workers, on the other hand are more separated from each other and this tends to break down concepts of solidarity in the workforce. The system of teamleaders is much less democratic, while stewards are directly accountable to members and can be dismissed or delegated if they do not perform their role well, teamleaders can not be deselected. On the other hand, the democratic election of shop stewards ensures that shop stewards are not *incorporated* into management's ethos (Coates & Topham 1972:82). In contrast to this, teamleaders are part of management and team-members do not have any method to *control* or expel them. According to AEEU's convenor Longley (1994), supervisors are able to restrict the work of stewards; for example, sometimes they do not give stewards time off when crucial meetings are taking place.

In such a culture, a "steward can easily become an outsider" (Batton and Reid 1991:20). In a survey (appendix C) to assess the relationship between the union and teamleaders the workforce was asked (question: 27): *Is the union a source of arguments or disagreements between the team and teamleader?* 25.9 % said *yes* and 44.4 % said *no*. For almost half union policy is not a source of argument between them. This indicates that the new system does not seem to have potential for conflict on this issue. To the question (28): *When there are disagreements with your teamleader over the union, how often does your team stick together and challenge the teamleader?* their responses were; *all the time* 19 %, *often* 28.6 %, *sometimes* 33.3 %, *never* 19

% . Given that almost 60 % said either *often* or *sometimes*, it seems that this is a potential minefield of conflict.

A further question was asked about conflicts among team-members themselves (question: 30): *Is the union a source of arguments or disagreements between team-members?* Only 11.1 % said that the union was an area of conflict between team-members; 63 % said the union was not an issue of conflict. In contrast to the team-member - teamleader relations, the union was much less an issue of conflicting views among team-members. Analysing both questions and their responses, the issue of unionism tends to divide teams from teamleaders, but not team-members amongst themselves. Since the issue of union participation divides teamleaders from teams, the following question was asked (question: 29): *In your opinion if there was a serious disagreement with your teamleader and the union, how likely would it be for the team to stick together and challenge the teamleader?* 27.8 % indicated *very likely*, 47.2 % said *likely*, 16.7 % mentioned *unlikely*, and the answer *highly unlikely* was given only by 8.3 %. In short, 75 % of the team-members would act together against a teamleader in order to defend their fundamental rights to trade union representation. In summary, it seems as if there is a significant gap between teams and teamleaders concerning union participation and this seems to restrict teamleaders' powers in totally undermining trade union representative structure.

Given management's direct access to workers through teamleaders, their ability to control teams, and their potential ability to either by-pass stewards or attack their network, it can be concluded that teamleaders perform an increasingly important pro-management role. According to TGWU-steward Garcia (1994), increasingly, management seems to "de-recognise supervisors, because teamleaders take over their functions". This perception has led to reaction from the union. "If teamleaders take the functions of supervisors, then we need to increase the number of stewards to the level of teamleaders" (John 1994). Vauxhall's TGWU discussed the issue of this power shift from supervisor to teamleader as the new player who challenges stewards.

To maintain the power balance between unions and management, unions continuously sought a numerical match between teamleaders and stewards, however management has always resisted such a proposal. Again, the conflict over this numerical match is *non-pluralist*; both management and union continue to act within a self-defensive and *adversarial* frame of reference.

The majority of teamleaders, then, identify with supervisors because their loyalty is not with their teams but with management, while only a few remain close to their union (hypothesis: C). As Garcia (1994) noted: "I had one former steward as teamleader in the paint shop who had to resign from being a steward, but he then became a union organiser". Most teamleaders seems to have *chosen their side* (cf. Parker & Slaughter 1988). In summary then, (a) teamleaders are a new person on the shopfloor appointed by management with direct influence and (b) they can provide significant control over workers. The issue of control is integral to the teamleader's loyalty to management. This is also supported by the team-members' survey answers which describe teamleaders as on the side of management. This is also confirmed by a high proportion of workers who state that, in the case of conflict between a team and a teamleader, they would act together against teamleaders. The appointment of teamleaders has resulted in a gap between teams and teamleaders. Given such a gap, the question of the representation of teams by teamleaders, as demanded in the agreement (Vauxhall 1992:4), is hardly clear. Such a question regarding representation can be transferred into the following hypothesis (b):

<i>Whether or not a teamleader is appointed, s/he will be a team and working area representative. Therefore, an appointed teamleader may get into conflict with an elected steward on the issue of: who represents?</i>
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Management and unions continue to operate in an *adversarial frame* of reference as far as the representative functions of teamleaders and stewards are concerned. Despite the gap between team and teamleaders, management claims that it (Vauxhall 1992:11) sees "the need to foster and maintain the best possible relationships with its employees based on a spirit of care, unity, teamwork, mutual trust and co-operation". Manage-

ment recognises the exclusive right of each union to communicate with its own members and did not want or did not feel they could take on the unions over such a fundamental issue or by-pass unions. In this sense management views representation as a *dual* structure: one form of representation is through unions and the other form of representation is through teamleaders. While a teamleader *represents* between five and fifteen workers, a steward represents on average 32 members. Using 49 TGWU-steward's constituencies (appendix P5), the size of each constituency varies significantly. Teamleaders are closer to team-members in terms of practice compared to stewards but may be seen as management's representatives by workers. Despite management's idea of a *dual* representation, unions view representation in a different way. It is interesting that TGWU-stewards rejected the notion of an elected teamleader because elections of teamleaders would not only incorporate a form of elected representation into management but would confuse members over the question: who represents?

Not all TGWU-stewards opposed elections; one at the door-section argued that, "teamleaders should be elected" (Sullivan 1993). However, the general view of TGWU- and AEEU-stewards was that teamleaders should be appointed, i.e. seen to be clearly management appointments; stewards, on the other hand, should be elected clearly by the workforce, and stewards who become teamleaders should no longer be able to stand as stewards. The unions' position is further explained by Batton and Reid (1991:20), as "stewards can be isolated and reduced in influence as the new type of supervisor/teamleader takes away the steward's role in: 1) caring for employees, 2) grievance-handling, 3) protection against higher management, 4) passing on information, 5)-community leadership". So, despite union attempts to separate the two roles, the very role of both overlaps and confuses the issue of representation. As a shop steward noted: "Teamleaders are not for the team, they are for management" (Sullivan 1993).

When team-members were asked (question: 25): *What do you think about your teamleader's position on the union?* 40.7 % said their attitude to the union was *too critical*, and only 1.9 % said *too supportive*. However, 40.7 % said *about right*. Since almost nobody mentioned *too supportive*, but many said *too critical*, teamleaders were definitely not viewed as pro-union. When asked the question (26): *What proportion of members of your team would agree with your assessment?* 29.6 % said *almost all*, 18.5 % said *most*, 11.1 % said *about half*, 13 % mentioned *some*, 1.9 % said *none*, and 11.1 % said *don't know*.

More important than a simple team-members' attitude to this is the question of representation or who to consult in case of a problem, which relates to number 1, 2, 3, and possibly number 5 of Batton & Reid's (1991:28) list of TGWU responses. The following question therefore assesses if and how far teamleaders are able to take over stewards' functions of representation (question: 23): *If you thought that you or someone on your team was being subjected to some form of on-the-job harassment or unfair treatment, to whom would you most likely turn to get something done?*

Who to ask:	your teamleader:	10 %
	your union representative:	82 %
	the personnel department:	2 %
	supervisors/others:	6 %

Over 80 % of team-members still turned to their steward as a first choice in the case of a problem; teamleaders only received 10 %; Vauxhall's union's have successfully ensured their survival; union members still believe that stewards and not teamleaders represent them. According to TGWU-steward Sadlier (1994), by the process of elections "power still rests with stewards, because members give them the power"; "stewards are closely identified with the workgroup they represent" (Terry 1984:71). According to the AEEU-convenor Longley (1994) "AEEU team-members still go to their stewards, they do not by-pass stewards".

Although stewards are not by-passed by teamleaders, management does try to by-pass stewards. At the door-section stewards were excluded from the so-called *Wednesday-meetings*, which were held with teamleaders including the supervisors. As a TGWU-

steward describes the situation: "Teamleaders on the *door-section* stay together and support the supervisor, they do not work and team-members have to do the job for them. The team has no chance to change this as teamleaders are not elected. They also cannot even have team-meetings without the teamleader. Teams cannot suggest new teamleaders, because of their fear of the teamleader and supervisor" (Sullivan 1993).

Since the introduction of teamleaders at the door-section unit is seen to be highly problematic, the following question (31) about the "real case" was asked: *When there is a disagreement with Vauxhall policy on union representation, does the teamleader side with the team (or team-member) or with the supervisor?* 11.1 % said they sided with the team, 29.6 % said they sided with the supervisor: 14.8 % said "the problem hasn't come up but they thought the teamleader would side with the team" (hypothetical case), 22.2 % said "the problem hasn't come up but the teamleader would side with the supervisor, and 5.6 % did not respond. The real case (29.6 %) and the hypothetical case (22.2 %) can be combined; the majority thinks that their teamleader would side with the supervisor. Given this gap between the two sides the area of potential conflict could shift from stewards-supervisors to stewards-teamleaders. This could be formulated as a hypothesis (f):

<i>Whether or not a teamleader is appointed, the area of conflict will shift more towards the shopfloor level.</i>
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Ideally with teamwork, more conflict avoidance or conflict resolution should take place, because most conflicts should be resolved within a team. However, one of the potential conflicts over the steward's ability to represent workers and resolve conflicts is that "management does not release stewards from their job" (interview: Longley 1994) in order to participate in problem-solving. Although steward's release for representation is a provision of Vauxhall's teamwork agreement, the release for stewards depends on the relationship between stewards and supervisor/teamleader. As the TGWU-steward Garcia (1994) noted: "If a steward can go off line to represent members depends on the relationship between the teamleader and the steward", which will

also depend on issues like the shop stewards attitudes and the likeliness of his opposing management; in other words whether or *not they like his attitude*. The ability of stewards to represent has now come to depend on a power relationship between supervisors and teamleaders. Even though TGWU and AEEU senior stewards claim that their stewards are able to represent union members, teamwork puts increased pressure on stewards in terms of limiting their role and power.

## 6.1.4. Conclusions

Teamleaders at Vauxhall are appointed and they use a *sell* or *test* style. Teamleaders have less loyalty to their team and more to management (hypothesis: C) because of the means of selection. Vauxhall's teamwork is therefore a management led system. However, unions have also been involved to inform their membership about the implications of teamwork and to ensure that it's membership voted on the issue of teamwork. Some stewards applied for a teamleaders' position and subsequently lost their position as stewards. Because of the *adversarial frame* of reference that prevails at Vauxhall, teamleaders are generally perceived as on management's side. While both AEEU and the TGWU lost several stewards, teamwork itself did not lead to an all-out challenge to union representation because the union secured their position, as far as possible, by not rejecting teamwork wholesale. They rejected some initiatives and were able to shape Vauxhall's teamwork to some extent.

While the unions succeeded in maintaining to a large degree their old representational power, the fact that stewards do not have access to all the teams weakens their overall position and influence and may in time lead to a weakening of the whole shop steward's system. In addition, not only are stewards disadvantaged by their smaller number, but they have to cope with an additional person who virtually replaces the role of the supervisor under a different guise and in this case *claims* to represent the views of the team. There is no doubt that the emergence of teamleaders strengthens manage-



ment, because stewards have to deal with both supervisors and teamleaders. The relationship between stewards and teamleaders could be described as: If there is a strong steward in an area, there will be a weak teamleader and vice-versa; however management has succeeded in reducing the conflict to smaller units and to issues of personal power rather than that of collective will and action.

Structurally, stewards are now in a weaker position at Vauxhall. It is not only structures that determine the outcome of control but personal relationships also have to be taken into account. However, even when stewards are personally strong and skilful, the structure of teamwork acts against them. Vauxhall's unions were successful in making sure that teamleaders and teams were seen as different, i.e. representing different interests by arguing for an appointment system. However the gap between management and unions continues through the teamwork system, although it could be argued that management's and union's *adversarial* relationship has now moved closer to the shopfloor.

While teamleaders can be and still are union members, they are not able to be stewards, because the latter is clearly identified with the union side. This gap between teams and teamleaders is supported by survey result; 75 % of all team-members believe that teams will stick together "all the time"/"often"/"sometimes" against teamleaders (question 28). Most important for the survival of an independent union representation is the question of who are the real representatives? Teamleaders can by-pass stewards, and team-members can go directly to teamleaders in case of problems rather than shop stewards. However, shop stewards maintain their legitimacy and credibility with the-workforce itself.

Unions have been successful in persuading union members to question the role of the teamleaders; team-members are aware that as far as the union is concerned teamleaders are definitely not on their side. They are clear on the issue of *choosing sides*, because their true representatives are stewards and not teamleaders who will tend to

justify management positions. On the other hand, management's power is strengthened through a combination of supervisors and teamleaders.

To conclude, the introduction of teamwork has not altered the structure of traditional representation and it has in no way changed the *adversarial frame* of reference of previous management-union relationships. Management and unions have remained in the *us vs. them* position. While it could be argued that management made some attempt to move unions into the direction of a *pluralist* frame of reference, management attempts were seen by the union as half-hearted and authoritarian; they did not inspire confidence or trust in the other side. Management practice did not go far enough in order for unions to accept management's statement that it wanted industrial democracy. Given that both sides were unable to move away from the old *adversarial frame* of reference, the introduction of teamwork did challenge union's representation on the shopfloor but failed to entirely dismantle it. Unions were able to ensure that stewards continued to represent workers and that Vauxhall's teamleaders have no major representative functions. However management has also laid a foundation of minor changes which if taken further could evolve and eventually undermine the role of shop stewards. In order to defend their different positions it seems unlikely that either management or unions can move away from an *adversarial frame* of reference. From a management view an attempt was made to behave pluralistically and to set up more democratic institutions however it seems that the style in which they did this only encouraged and fed the suspicious of the other side. In other words management had an opportunity to change the IR system at Vauxhall but failed to do so even though it failed to achieve its secondary objective, i.e. *pluralism*, it gained its primary objective, i.e. the introduction of teamwork.

Chapter

# 6.2.

## **Teamwork & the Structure of Representation at Opel**

## 6.2. Teamwork & the Structure of Representation at Opel

Given GM's American teamwork experience, the question for Opel's management according to Turner (1991:125) was how to transform a traditional plant into something approximating to the NUMMI-model without closing the plant. Since management and works councils were legally obliged to behave within a *pluralist* frame of reference, GM's demand for change was a challenge to both. By mid-1985 discussions on teamwork became increasingly important and this resulted in a *production groups* concept.

Although GM's operations world-wide are headed by GME, according to Opel's teamwork-manager Hildmann (1993): "GME did not define our policy on teamwork because they felt this would destroy creativity and narrow our options". Again crucial for Opel's works council and for management was the selection of teamspeakers. Since GME did not interfere, Opel's management had a choice of electing teamspeakers or appointing teamleaders. Because of their legal position the works council was in a strong bargaining position to influence this discussion. According to Opel's teamwork-manager Hildmann (1993), it was the works council which made "the introduction of teamwork conditional on the *election* of teamspeakers".

Opel's tradition of *pluralism*, *integrative bargaining* and industrial democracy in management-works council relations, GME's non-interference policy, and the works council's relatively strong bargaining power on work organisation helped to create the policies and practices that affected the introduction of teamwork. Eventually after some negotiating Opel's teamwork-manager Hildmann (1993) "agreed to the election of teamspeakers", so that teams could elect their leaders (Shire 1991:11). This created a *workgroup* unit with a leader and some degree of coherence. Opel's teamleaders were not imposed by supervisors or management. Management and the works council were interested in creating a good relationship between teams and middle manage-

ment. Opel's teamspeakers were not intended to lead their teams, but to improve links between supervisors and teams, and general communications down the chain of command.

## 6.2.1. Teams, Teamwork and Leadership

Both Opel's management and the works council saw teams as the core element of QNPS. Organising workers into teams under QNPS's was designed to be different from just working on the assembly line. Although teams are called *Fertigungsgruppen* (production teams), Katzenbach & Smith, Kirsch (1993) and even IGM's literature (1991) on teams seriously suggests that, according to their own definition, *real teams* do not exist at Opel (cf. chapter 2.1.1.). In contrast to the old supervisor-worker structure, where the supervisor is set apart as a leader, *teamleadership* is not so defined, nevertheless leadership is not *shared* (Katzenbach & Smith 1993). For example, individual workers are given a small ink stamp to sign each *card* on a car to testify that only quality products leave a team area. That workers (not a team) are individually accountable for this, indicates the existence of a *workgroup* which is working co-operatively according to some cohesive plan. Since each worker assembles an individual part, the Taylorist fragmentation of work tasks still prevails under the new teamwork system at Opel. According to Kirsch (1993), Opel's teamwork might better be called *Arbeit im Raumverband* or working in a *loose group* which has a loose internal structure (chapter 2.1.1). According to IGM's *Reform 2000* (1991:57), teamwork is defined as a group of workers who not only produce a complete product, but also check its function and quality; Opel's teams neither build a complete product, nor do they run quality checks. In contrast to workgroups, however, teams participate in active problem-solving through open discussions during team-meetings. Opel's overall performance and reward system is not linked to teamwork. Even though *auditing* (a review of a complete car for quality problem-solving) is introduced on certain sec-

tions, team performance is not collectively assessed. According to Katzenbach & Smith's definition of groups and teams, Opel's teamwork concept lies somewhere between a *workgroup* and a *team*.

Opel's teamspeakers are part of the team on whose behalf they speak (for Smith et al. (1984:176) they *consult* or *join*) so they neither make decisions themselves (*tell* or *sell*) nor perform as an authoritarian (cf. White & Lippitt 1960) figure (*test*). Teamspeakers still tend to define the situation and possible course of action and then consult their subordinates for comments and opinions. Opel's teamspeakers are not able to by-pass team-members or to act against their opinions or decisions. Opel's teamspeakers need to *consult* a team, because s/he depends on the team that elects him, so teamspeakers tend towards a participative style. The teamspeaker and team-members jointly review the situation and reach a decision on appropriate action. Even though in some rare cases newly appointed teamspeakers tried to take over a supervisor's responsibilities, the middle-management, the works council and the teams ensured that their functions remain within BV 179. While the very existence of teamwork at Opel measured by Katzenbach & Smith's and Kirsch's definitions can seriously be questioned, a leadership style analysis clearly demonstrates the participative role of teamspeakers.

### 6.2.2. The Works Council and the Introduction of Teamwork

With the introduction of teamwork at a traditional motor-car plant, a new level of supervision or representation emerges, i.e. teamspeakers. The shape of teamwork is again largely defined by the existing structure of representation in such a plant. At Opel then, both management and the works council recognised differences in interests but an attempt was made to mediate these differences by setting up structures for participation within an *integrative bargaining* approach; unlike the *adversarial* model

(cf. Vauxhall) or the unitarist model (cf. Toyota) which dominates and attempt to exclude unions and workers' representatives.

Opel's IGM structure of representation demonstrates this dualist system; it is made up of workplace representatives (VPs) and the works council (BR). Workplace representatives and works councils are part of a long tradition of management-BR/VP co-operation. Some IGM's workplace representatives operate on the edge of the *adversarial frame* of reference as an unofficial paint-shop strike showed. While this industrial action was in response to a conflict of interests with management, workplace representatives reacted by moving towards an *adversarial frame* of reference. However, as a result of this industrial action, works council and management re-negotiated the issue and managed to reach a settlement. Opel's works council was able to use workplace representatives operating outside the *pluralist* frame of reference to put pressure on management to negotiate. So while the works council's role is to mediate, it sometimes draws strength from the workplace representatives who operate on a more *adversarial* model.

One additional institution of industrial democracy is Opel's *economic committee* (*Wirtschaftsausschuß*), i.e. a management-works council joint committee on Opel's business affairs; at Rüsselsheim works council-members and management discuss issues particularly connected with the business strategy of the company. During a meeting of the *economic committee* on GM's business strategy for the 1990s, QNPS were discussed and Opel's works council was informed about management's plan for teamwork long before it was implemented.

Opel's works council demanded a general framework agreement covering Rüsselsheim, Bochum and Kaiserslautern. Already in the 1970s as part of a government initiated scheme for *Humanisation of work*, teamwork was promoted by Opel's works council, but was received with little interest on the part of management. Negotiation for an agreement became a central issue for management and the works council

in 1989. The BV 179 agreement was reached by April 1991 when Opel's group-works council and management formally agreed to introduce teamwork. Given the relationship between Opel's works council and the IGM, and IGM's demand that if teamwork was introduced an agreement between works councils and management had to be achieved (IGM-Reform 1991:58), Opel's works council secured its position via IGM by obtaining a democratic teamwork agreement. The demand by IGM, Opel's works council and management for a teamwork-agreement shows the importance of the *pluralist* frame of reference for all three players. It also demonstrated the BR's willingness to co-operate with management in that it supported management's demand for teamwork. Management and works council were almost obliged to agree on the issue of teamwork; although the main decision came from the works council, management however still had to face opposition from middle-management (supervisors, etc.). For management the goal was greater efficiency and productivity for the works council and workplace representatives the aim was a *humanisation of work*. The goals were different for both but both felt that they were able to achieve some of these goals through agreement.

Section 90 of the German works constitution (BetrVG) demands that Opel's works council has the right to be informed about the introduction of a new production process. Teamwork involved a wide range of legal provisions in the BetrVG; Hunold (1993:6) has listed a number of regulations regarding the introduction of Opel's teamwork and lean production (QNPS):

Table 6.5.: Teamwork and BetrVG

Section:	Area of Regulation:
90:	change in production and workplaces,
92:	personnel planning and personnel development,
106:	business affairs,
111:	change in production organisation, methods and process technology
87, no.1:	business organisation,
87, no.10:	introduction of new wage structures,
91:	humanisation of work,
98:	training,
99:	personnel related outsourcing, employment in teams,
111:	social plan.



According to sec. 81 BetrVG, information about the introduction of teamwork had to be given so that works councils could discuss the issues proposed by management. The general organisation of a company (*Ordnung des Betriebes*) is an issue for Sec. 87 BetrVG and management's plan for a team design, teamspeaker, team-meetings and project teams are aspects that apply directly to this section. With the introduction of teamwork schemes for suggestions (Kaizen) and since Kaizen is part of GM's QNPS, such suggestion schemes were asked for in sec. 87 BetrVG. Since teams also were able to create a certain amount of flexibility over work time (Sec. 87 BetrVG), Opel's works council has to be involved regarding issues such as the commencement and ending of work time and holiday planning.

Before teamwork was introduced, Opel had changed the wage structure to narrow the wage grades; it demanded that an allowance for teamspeakers should be introduced. Since teamspeakers are rewarded differently from ordinary team-members (Sec. 87 BetrVG), Opel's works council again was concerned as it regulates works councils' participation in issues like wages; wage structures are negotiated between union and management representatives on a regional and sectional basis (chapter 5.2.). GM's management offered a very small wage increase = 30 pence per hour to teamspeakers and since then unions have not demanded a wage increase for teamspeakers on a collective bargaining basis as the union supports the principle of equal pay for all team-members including the teamspeakers.

Personnel planning again is directly related to a works council's legal right to participate and some aspects of teamwork relate to Sec. 92 BetrVG (personnel planning); in the case of team size, staffing, team design, etc. The staffing of teams is an important issue because if new teams are made up of new workers and management wants external applications, then works councils can according to Sec. 93 BetrVG demand

that, in the first instance, internal applications must be considered. No applicants however were considered because the agreement regulating that teams were to be organised along existing sections of production determined that the teamspeaker had to come from within a team. Whenever management assessed workers for new positions (cf. teamspeakers), works councils needed to agree on the assessment regulations (Hunold 1993:30). Whenever these assessments were used at job interviews, works councils could attend assessment seminars as observers. Opel ultimately did not use an assessment scheme for teamspeakers and team-members, because teamwork was introduced at a brown-field site with existing workers. Much use however was made of Opel's training scheme for teamspeakers, because the works councils were able to participate in the design of these courses.

Sec. 111 BetrVG demands that information has to be given to the works councils if basic production design is reorganised. "According to Womack et al., lean production is a second revolution in production and can lead to changes in basic production design" (Hunold 1993:13) therefore, the works council has to be consulted during the introduction of QNPS. One element of QNPS is SOS. While these are areas in which Opel's works council can participate, internal work distribution within a team is not an item that needs agreement between management and workers because team-members can organise internal work distribution among themselves. Therefore Opel's works council does not have any legal right to participate (Hunold 1993:20). Works councils are involved when Kaizen activities of a team result in changes in the workplace. According to sec. 91 BetrVG (human design of workplaces), the law requires that the newest available standards for the design of a workplace for teamwork has to be used.

Besides the legal requirements, IGM formulated 12 main principles for the introduction of teamwork, which provided guidelines for works councils and workplace representatives. These guidelines were (Roth et al. 1988, 1992):

Table 6.6.: IGM's Guidelines and Application

IGM's Principles:	Application at Opel:
(1) a broad assignment of varying tasks for the group (including long cycle times);	Opel's BR did not reach an agreement to assign tasks to a team, nor for an extension of cycle time.
(2) group competence in decision making in: job rotation, division of the work, quality control, and training needs;	Opel's agreement allows teams to rotate, etc., but teams at Opel cannot decide their training needs.
(3) decentralisation of the plant decision-making structure;	With the agreement, decision-making was transferred from supervisor to teams
(4) selection of production organisation and technology suitable for group work (based on decentralised technology and production concepts);	Opel's management reversed this by re-organising cockpit and door production from box manufacturing back to line manufacturing.
(5) equal pay for group members;	Payment is still according to different wage levels.
(6) equal opportunity for all, including special training where necessary for the disabled and the socially disadvantaged, to participate in groupwork (as "solidaristic" work organisation);	Although BR's were able to ensure the position of disabled and disadvantaged in its agreement, in practice however disabled and disadvantages workers were not only made redundant through the separation program, but were also made to leave assembly teams.
(7) support for the personal and occupational development of individuals and the group;	Opel's agreement included training schemes for team-speaker.
(8) regular group meetings, at least one hour per week;	BR's successfully negotiated regular team-meetings on a weekly basis (1 h).
(9) representation of group interests within the established plant system of representation;	Although IGM's guidelines do not demand an election system for teamspeaker, BR's achieved that in the agreement and in practice.
(10) voluntary participation in the groups;	Although the agreement notes IGM's demand, it was not implemented.
(11) pilot projects to test the functioning of group work before broader implementation;	Opel's BR negotiated pilot projects and monitored them.
(12) a joint steering committee at the firm level, with equal labour and management representation, to oversee and co-ordinate the implementation of group work and the activities of groups*	Such a joint management-BR committee was set up and meets regularly every two weeks to discuss developments.

While Opel's works council failed to negotiate a re-organisation of production on a more *human* basis with a longer cycle time, the works council managed to give teams autonomy over their own work assignments Opel's teams can be measured on the Gulowsen scale (1979) of team-autonomy (chapter: 2.1.1.1.):

Table 6.7.: Team Autonomy at Opel

	no participation	participation	co-decision-making	autonomy
1				teamleader selection
2	new members in teams			
3			distribution of work	
4	time flexibility			
5	acceptance of additional work			
6	representation outside the team			
7			methods of production	
8	production goals (output)			
9			production goals (quality)	

Team-members did have an input in their day to day working lives and as a result the supervisory role was reduced. However, Opel's works council was not able to extend the team based *box-manufacturing* in the cockpit and door-section to other areas of production (cf. Schonberger 1982). In fact, the reverse happened, in both areas *box-manufacturing* was abolished and moved back to *line-manufacturing*. The failure of

Opel's works council to achieve longer *cycle time* and *box-manufacturing* demonstrates the significant limitations of the bargaining power of Opel's works council once issues have left the area of social affairs.

A decision on the selection system for teamspeakers was connected with the area of personnel affairs, and therefore in this area works councils, could exercise its influence. Opel's works council convinced management to introduce elections, even though IGM's guidelines did not demand either training programmes for the workforce or the election of teamspeakers. Although Opel's works council was less successful in negotiating training, it did negotiate considerable time off for team-meetings. Equally successful was the introduction and monitoring of pilot projects and the creation of a joint committee to oversee teamwork (Shire 1991:7). On February 5 1993, the works council's committee on teamwork organised a meeting of all area-works council-members to assess the development of teamwork and to discuss the affects on union representation. Although this meeting was organised by Opel's works council many managers of the joint committee were invited. This only one example of the *high-trust* relationship between management and works council.

In summary, although Opel's works council was unsuccessful in influencing discussions and decisions on production related matters, it was very successful in personnel and social matters. Team-members were able to elect their teamspeakers without interference from management, supervisors or middle-management.

### 6.2.3. Teamspeakers, Teams and Representation

Opel's management and the works council agreed to give teams the maximum input on the decision on the selection of teamspeakers they were willing to create an additional player on the shopfloor. This could be formulated in the hypothesis (a):

*Whether or not a teamleader is elected or appointed, a teamleader will be a new player within participation (industrial democracy) on the shopfloor.*

Opel's teams do have a clear say on these issues because they elect teamleaders; a new player is introduced who has a basis of legitimacy through a democratic election. The question of how teamspeakers represent workers is more connected with their working situation; if they are a working member of a team, they are team-members with the function of a speaker. In contrast, if they are likely to be not a working member of a team, they are more disconnected and become more distant from their teams. As works council-member Reitingen (1993) at final assembly put it: "Teamspeakers should not be taken off the assembly line, otherwise s/he may become another form of supervisor, the question also arises who will cover her/his work?"

Works council-members on final assembly particularly oppose the notion of a teamspeaker who is disconnected from his/her team; Opel's BV 179 demands that teamspeakers are active players (i.e. working team-members) and works council-members support this. Given that Opel's final assembly is almost completely unionised, teamspeakers who are also union members, need to be working members of a team so that there is no distance between team-members and their speaker.

The survey question (appendix D, question: 27): *Is the VP/works council a source of arguments or disagreements between the team and teamleader?* was asked. Only 8 % said yes and 84 % said that the works council/workplace representative was not a source of conflict between team-members and speakers. Given the specification in BV 179, workers do not see any difference between themselves and the speakers. Given this, no-gap between team-members and their teamspeakers can be detected. Respondents also replied to the question (28): *If yes, when there are disagreements with your teamspeaker over the VP/works council, how often does your team stick together and challenge the teamleader?* 75 % of them said they either *never* or *only sometimes* stick together to challenge their speaker. Team-members do not feel a need to stick together against their speakers because solidarity exists with the teamspeaker; team-

work, then, has created a significant degree of cohesion between teams and speakers. Team-members accept their teamspeakers are not a new form of supervisor and that teamspeakers do represent the interest of the team.

Since teamspeakers are elected by teams, workplace representatives are elected by their workgroup, and works council-members are elected by all Opel-workers, another question arises, which can be formulated in hypothesis (b):

*Whether or not a teamleader is appointed or elected, s/he will be a team and working area representative. Therefore an elected or appointed teamleader may get into conflict with a workplace representatives and/or an elected works council-member on the issue of: Who does represent?*

As a team-member, a worker, and a union-member, each worker votes for three different people at three different levels, that is her/his team (= teamspeaker), her/his working area (= workplace representative) and her/his plant (= works council). Opel's works council has a relatively high degree of bargaining power but is also distant from workers because of the provisions of the BetrVG that regulate the ratio between workers and works council-members. All workers at Opel's plant elect the works council based on the lists drawn up by unions. Works council elections are held plant-wide and even if a works council-member is assigned to an area, s/he does not have a constituency. However, it is obviously important in terms of representation for works council-members to be known, even though workers in their area do not elect them directly (cf. proportional representation), they often recognise their name on a union list. On the basis of the election results of Opel's latest works council's election, IGM currently has 43 out of the 45 works council-members. As one area works council-member represents about 750 workers, the most powerful person to represent a worker is at the same time the most distant. Closer to the worker on the shopfloor are the workplace representatives who are elected as union representatives. As union membership at final assembly is well above 95 %, almost all workers elect their workplace representative in their working area. On average one workplace representative represents 19 union members at final assembly line; throughout Opel the size of a constituency is 25 (appendix P6). Not only the size of the union constituency varies

between final assembly and the rest of Opel's operation, the team size also varies between 13 team-members on average and six to eight at final assembly. This has a number of advantages for workers; they are able to communicate directly and immediately with their workplace representatives. Given this relative closeness to their members, workplace representatives are often the contact person between works councils and workers. However a teamspeaker is closer than a workplace representative to the workers; Opel's teams final assembly are about 1/2 the size of a workplace representative's constituency.

Unlike the case of teamspeakers, procedures for the election of works councils and workplace representatives are clear; they are held by a secret ballot. According to works council-member Franz (1993b) "some teamspeakers were already re-elected without have team-meetings", despite the fact that elections should take place during team-meetings. In some "cases on the line, teamspeakers were elected according to nationality" (Wink 1993), which has proved a problem given the mixture of nationalities on Opel's assembly line because it fosters conflicts among team-members and teamspeakers with different nationalities.

On the Omega-production line approximately 30 % of workplace representatives were elected as teamspeakers (interview: Seib 1993), the plant-wide figure lays between 10% and 15%. The VP-committee saw this result as the failure of the VP-convenor's work. In the following elections for the VP-convenor he was not re-elected. According to the new VP-convenor Ziegler (1993), the results of teamspeakers' re-elections in 1992 and 1993 did not change the number of workplace representatives elected; it stayed the same. According to Ziegler (1993), the current number of workplace representatives (1,000) cannot be increased to the level of teamspeakcr (2,500) because of the unmanageable number of teamspeakers. Given that ratio, one workplace representative may have to cover 2.5 teams, which also means that approximately 1.5 teams do not have a direct form of union representation. At one workplace representative meeting, for example, held on the Omega-line (shift B) on 28. January 1993,

two out of the 10 workplace representatives were teamspeakers at the same time. While the current VP-convenor accepts that ratio, his predecessor Wink (1993) explained:

If workplace representatives do not get elected as teamspeakers, such teamspeakers should be made workplace representatives. One of the reasons for a workplace representative not getting elected as a teamspeaker lies probably in the fact that the workplace representative just passes on information to the workers. Hence, the workplace representative worked more from the works council down to the workers instead of the reverse.

However, before the first elections took place, *Meisters* made it clear that they expected only workplace representatives would be elected as teamspeakers (interview: Hildmann 1993). Also, BR-member Franz (1990:5) predicted that ideally, the teamspeaker and the workplace representative should be the same person. The result of having only 10-15 % workplace representatives elected as teamspeakers raised serious questions about the quality of a workplace representatives' work.

The number of Opel's workplace representatives is linked to the number of *Meisters* and while VP-convenor Ziegler argues to keep that at the same level, BR-member Wink argues for an extension of the number of workplace representatives to the level of teamspeakers, which would result in approximately 2,500 workplace representatives. In the future, according to the prediction of Opel's teamwork-manager Hildmann (1993) a *Meister* will be a co-ordinator of four to five teams in his area and act as a link between shopfloor and management. On average about one workplace representative is in a *Meister*-area and with the introduction of teamwork the number of *Meisters* remained roughly the same. The ratio between *Meisters* and workplace representatives has not change dramatically between 1991 and 1994. However this may change as *Meisters'* areas become larger. A workplace representatives has a particular role in representing different opinions within a team, whereas the teamspeaker represents a team view. While a workplace representative not only has to deal with different opinions among union members in her/his area, s/he may also face dealing with differences between teams. Before teamwork arrived differences between union mem-



bers were largely dealt with on an individual basis, now different opinions can be expressed by different teams.

As team-meetings are not seen as an appropriate forum for union discussions; management at Opel's feared that local labour representatives would fill-up team-meeting times with discussions about union negotiations and other political issues (Shire 1991:11). In reality this did not happen because teamspeakers were in control of the agenda of team-meetings. Again as most teams do not have a workplace representative as teamspeaker, or even a workplace representative as a team-member, union opinion is not present at all. According to works council-member Seib (1993), "this creates a mode of excluding union representation". It might be argued that a workplace representative in the role of a teamspeaker could influence and better represent a team. According to works council-member Witte (1993) workplace representatives should not be teamspeakers, because team-members would see them as disconnected from the team. They would no longer work on the assembly line if they incorporated both roles; this would lead to a gap between workers and their representatives. While workplace representatives have in some cases become teamspeakers, works council-members are unlikely to run as a candidate for teamspeakers' election; works council-members are excluded because they have a *full-time* position and they are not a member of a team.

At the time of the introduction of teamwork, the DGB's education institution (*Arbeit und Leben*) organised workshops on *New Management Culture* in Rüsselsheim to discuss lean production, Opel's QNPS, teamwork and the role of teamspeakers. At these workshops, workplace representatives and works council-members openly discussed the question: Would it be appropriate for the workplace representative or the teamspeaker to represent workers?

Two years after BV 179 was signed, team-members at final assembly were asked (question: 25): *What do you think about your teamspeaker's position in relationship*

to the works council/workplace representative? 42 % saw their teamspeaker's position in relationship to the works council/workplace representatives as *about right*, but surprisingly 40 % ticked the *no response* box. When asked (question: 26): *What proportion of members of your team would agree with your assessment?* they answered that they thought 80 % of their fellow team-members would agree to the statement that the relationship between teamspeakers and works council/workplace representatives is *about right*. It seems that teamspeakers are not seen as an anti-union force at Opel and management did not attempt to set up structures to by-pass union workplace representatives. Teamspeakers are not an additional structure of union representation, even though they seem to act as an additional and supportive channel of communication. One of the crucial points of representation, either through workplace representatives or works council-members, is the first contact between a worker, a union member or a team-member and the person who represents them. To the question (23): *If you thought that you or someone on your team was being subjected to some form of on-the-job harassment or unfair treatment, whom would you most likely turn to get something done?* almost 50 % said they would go to their teamspeaker, 22 % named their workplace representative, 24 % said their works council-member, only 6 % wanted to go to supervisors, 2 % said the personnel department. Teamspeakers are clearly seen as representative for work related problems, even though, put together, workplace representatives and the works council obtained 46 % of the votes. Teamspeakers are clearly not seen as part of a management-dominated structure of representation designed to by-pass union or works council representation. In the words of Opel's VP-convenor Ziegler (1993): "Teamspeakers and workplace representatives work together". Since a teamspeaker is closely linked to a team, s/he not only represents the view of a team, but also depends directly on their backing through elections; teamspeakers then, support the overall structure of representation at Opel.

Crucial to the question of representation is which side would a teamspeaker take in the case of a conflict between management's interest and worker's interest. Hence, team-members were asked (question: 31): *When there is a disagreement with Opel's*

*policy on the works council/VP, does the teamspeaker side with the team (or team-member) or with the supervisor?* 21.6 % said that the teamspeaker would side with the team and 17,6 % saw their teamspeaker siding with the supervisor. However, as the problem had not occurred so far, 49 % of the team-members said that the problem had not arisen and if it would arise (question 31), the teamleader would side with the team; only 11.8 % saw them identifying with their supervisor, if a problem did occur. These differences too may be because there are differences in the allegiances of individual teamspeakers. On the whole team-members see their speakers as very much part of their team, i.e. *one of us* and see the supervisor as an outsider.

Given the close co-operation between team-members and teamspeakers, Opel's teamspeakers can be seen within *the teamspeaker joins* category (Smith et al. 1984:176), i.e. they seem totally committed to a participative style. Even Opel's production manager views teamspeakers in that way: "The team at Rüsselsheim elects a teamspeaker, who is neither a supervisor nor a superior" (Enderle 1991). Opel's teamspeakers are not a source of a new form of management control, they are rather a cohesive team-member with speaker functions.

One of the common expectations is that, with teamwork, conflicts will not only appear on the shopfloor, but that they may also be addressed in team-meetings before reaching the stage of workplace representatives, works councils, and personnel departments. Such an expectation can be expressed in the following hypothesis (f):

<i>Whether or not a teamleader/speaker is appointed or elected, the area of conflict may shift more towards the shopfloor level.</i>
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Since almost half of the team-members stated that they would go to their workplace representative or their area-BR-member in the case of problems, conflicts, it seems, are still solved within the traditional structure of representation. However, the other half of the team-members mentioned the teamspeaker as the person to consult; workplace representatives themselves seems to view the introduction of teamspeakers as helpful because minor problems can be solved at either the team level, through team-

meetings or face-to-face as the teamspeakers are elected and accountable. Workplace representatives feel that this is some assistance to their work of representing union members. Given the results of the survey and the case study, teamspeakers seemed to support works council's and workplace representatives' role.

## 6.2.4. Conclusions

Traditionally, German car plants have an IR system operating a balanced works council-management relationship which operates like Walton and McKersie's (1965) *integrative bargaining* model for in-plant bargaining. This includes a union based workplace representative system. As works councils are based on the principles established on BetrVG, they have traditionally operated within a *pluralist* frame of reference. In addition, Opel's workplace representatives can also be seen as part of this *pluralist* frame of reference. Despite this general picture, not all issues are approached in this way. Management and workplace representatives sometimes operate within both a *pluralistic* and an *adversarial* frame of reference, as the paint-shop strike demonstrates; when management cancelled a BV workplace representatives reacted with a strike. Opel's works council was able to move management and workplace representatives back into a *pluralist* frame of reference so that negotiations took place and a solution was found. Equally the workplace representatives were able to exert influence both on Opel's works council and management to address their grievances.

In BV 179 Opel labelled its teams *production teams*; the main purpose of introducing teams was a new organisational form in production areas. Katzenbach & Smith (1991), Kirsch (1993) and IGM however seriously challenge the use of Opel's label *teams*. Opel's teams according to their definition are not teams, they have some characteristics of a team but are more like workgroups. Opel strongly claims to have introduced a team-concept but they are little more than workgroups with elected teamspeakers. On the one hand the BetrVG gives Opel's works council significant influ-

ence over personnel issues (cf. teamwork); on the other hand it showed significant limitations on the works council's bargaining power particularly once issues have left the area of personnel affairs. An example of this limitation is the inability of the works council to influence Opel's management on production issues; Opel's *box-production* was moved back to a line system despite IGM arguments for a *humanisation of work*. In contrast to this, Opel's works council was able to ensure that teams have a clear input in selecting their teamspeaker, this resulted in a close link between teamspeakers and teams.

As a team-member, a worker and a union-member, each worker votes for three different people at three different levels; at team level, at the level of her/his work area, and at plant level. Teamwork is a phenomena that affects works council much less than workplace representatives who work on the shopfloor. Although works councils, workplace representatives, and management expected that workplace representatives would be elected as teamspeakers, the election results were devastating for Opel's union representation; only 10 % to 15 % of the workplace representatives were elected as teamspeakers which reflects the way that workers viewed their workplace representatives. However, this did not result in a conflict of representation between teamspeaker and workplace representatives because teamspeakers are clearly seen as representative for a range of work related problems. Consequently team-members, because they elect their teamspeaker, see her/him as much as a representative of their concerns as they see works councils and workplace representatives. Team-members see their speakers very much as being one of them; they see supervisors, on the other hand, as outsiders and workers do not identify with them. Opel's works council was successful in installing an additional level of workers' representation. Since teamspeakers are also union members and part of the team in this system, they do not form a new supervisory group because their legitimacy is based on an election by team-members.

To conclude, Opel's works council and management was successful in introducing a team-concept which supports representation by adding a third level of representation via teamspeakers. Even though IGM failed to get its workplace representatives elected for teamspeakers, new teamspeakers did not act as a force against team-members or union workplace representatives. Several aspects ensure the link between teamspeaker and team-members; most crucial is the team-based election of teamspeakers. By setting up a democratic team structure as regulated in BV 179. Opel's team-concept is not seen as a threat to traditional forms of representation, but supplements Opel's dual structure of representation. The pluralist IR system at Opel with its system of weights and balances has not been affected by the introduction of teamwork. The confidence felt by workers in their teamspeakers has increased rather than decreased their sense of participation; they feel that the structure of representation is now closer to the shopfloor. However while the introduction of teamwork has not undermined a pluralist approach based on legal requirements it has had some implications for the work based union layer of IR.

## 6.3. Comparative Conclusions

Opel and Vauxhall, both GM subsidiaries introduced teamwork in 1992 into their respective national IR systems. Both team-concepts have been compared in two different plants, in the context of two different countries and in the context of two different IR systems; there are some similarities between the two teamwork systems but also as many divergences largely because of their traditional IR systems; one essentially *adversarial* in approach (Vauxhall) and the other pluralistic (Opel).

By focusing on important points of comparison between the two plants it is possible to illuminate the central research question: *To what extent and in what ways does the institutional context affect the transition from a traditional system of representation to teamwork and how does this affect the general structure of representation?* To analyse whether or not there are real teams operating in Vauxhall and Opel it has also been necessary to apply the same criteria to both and to examine similarities and divergences within different IR contexts. Both systems have very different ways of organising workers' representation and it has been necessary to see how the introduction of teamwork has affected these systems to examine whether or not traditional representational forms have been changed.

### 6.3.1. Teams, Teamwork and Leadership

Teams at Opel and Vauxhall are similar in size. Opel's teams have between five to fifteen members and Vauxhall's teams have eight to fifteen. Since team-members in both plants do not need to communicate with each other to carry out their production task, i.e. within a Fordist/Taylorist context, they are working in *Arbeit im Raumverband* (Kirsch 1993:19) with a loose internal structure, i.e. they are *groups* rather than *teams* (Katzenbach & Smith 1993). While their membership size is approximately the same

in both plants, they differ fundamentally in their leadership and leadership style. While Opel's teams have a teamspeaker whose team identifies with them, Vauxhall's teams have teamleaders, i.e. team-members do not identify with their teamleader. Opel's teamspeakers use a participative leadership style, teamspeaker *joins*; Vauxhall's teamleaders are much more likely to adapt a teamleader *tells* style. While Opel's teamspeakers are seen as part of the team, Vauxhall's teamleaders are appointed and this seems to determine the style of their leadership. Besides the issue of different leadership styles, teams in both plants are given a certain degree of autonomy although this is marginally greater at Opel particularly in terms of influencing the production process on the shopfloor. Applying Gulowsen's scale ( 1979) the difference is clear:

Table 6.8.: Autonomy at Vauxhall (VA) and Opel (OP)

	no participation	participation	co-decision-making	autonomy
<b>teamleader selection</b>	<b>VA</b>			<b>OP</b>
new members in teams	VA and OP			
distribution of work			VA and OP	
time flexibility	VA and OP			
acceptance of additional work	OP	VA		
representation outside a team	OP	VA		
methods of production		VA	OP	
production goals (output)	VA and OP			
production goals (quality)	VA		OP	

Vauxhall's and Opel's teams are both allowed a significant input on *internal work distribution* and on methods of production. However the degree of real autonomy for both is small with the one exception that of *elected* teamspeakers at Opel.

### 6.3.2. Representation and the Introduction of Teamwork

The introduction of teamwork with a 5 % wage increase at Vauxhall and with no wage increase at Opel to some degree indicates the essential differences in both sys-



tems. In the former case management saw the workforce as needing a financial incentive to establish a management led teamwork system; the pay increase helped to counter union opposition and to persuade the workforce. In Opel's pluralistic system the process could be handled more democratically and co-operatively using Walton and McKersie's (1965) *integrative bargaining* model without financial incentives and with much less threat to a representative system in which different powers are distributed between workplace representatives; *Blockies* and the works council.

Opel's IR has a dual structure; issues such as teamwork were introduced at plant level, while issues such as wage bargaining are left to regional and sectorial collective bargaining between IGM and the employers federation. While works councils and management negotiate on plant-level (*integrative bargaining*), unions and employer representatives act on a sectorial & regional level (*distributive bargaining*). Therefore, Opel's teamwork could not be linked to a wage increase, unless the IGM had negotiated for this; significantly the union did not link the introduction of teamwork and wages even though teamspeakers were offered some financial reward for their new responsibilities.

While IGM is the dominant union at Opel and other unions are marginalised, Vauxhall has two main unions (AEEU and TGWU). Opel's introduction of teamwork was negotiated between the works council and management almost without consultation with the IGM; at Vauxhall, unions were the main players and direct consultation with TGWU and AEEU representatives took place. One of the striking differences between Vauxhall and Opel is that a vote was taken on the agreement by all union members at Vauxhall, while Opel's agreement was signed by the works council and management without any vote by workers, i.e. an *adversarial* system saw the need to use a democratic strategy in order to take the workforce with it (having, of course put forward a financial incentive) while the more pluralist system operated through its existing more democratic institutions to gain acceptance. Since workers, not IGM-

members, elect Opel's works council, BV did not need workers' direct approval via voting, such agreements are then legally binding on and apply directly to all workers.

With the agreements, both plants introduced an institutionalised forms of IR (i.e. in terms of joint steering committees), Vauxhall's JPC and Opel's *Lenkungsausschuß*. Although both committees were designed to support the introduction of teamwork, Opel's committee survived because of the long established participatory relationship between management and the works council that already existed as part of the pluralist approach. The *Lenkungsausschuß* was seen as a continuation, that is, part of an on-going process of workers management relationships; management and works council met on a regular basis and therefore chose the *integrative bargaining-option* of mediation and negotiation.

Because Vauxhall's unions did not have any form of regular meeting with management before teamwork and as there was no ethos of co-operation, both sides preferred to negotiate issues on an ad hoc basis without any institutionalised form, i.e. they acted in a non-institutionalised and *adversarial* fashion as in the past. Furthermore, Vauxhall's unions soon left the JPC over conflicts with management on *out-sourcing*. Management's attempt to move unions from an *adversarial* towards a *pluralist* frame of reference failed partly because the union was used to the traditional system and trusted it. Management also failed to create confidence in a new approach. Management's attitude to the JPC was felt by the workforce to be the same as in previous JCC's, i.e. a means of imposing management decisions. Unions, then, continued to reject any notion of being *incorporated* into management's agenda. During the 1990s, Vauxhall's unions experienced themselves in a disadvantaged position because of the recession and other external political factors and feared further erosion of their power through new management strategies. In short, Vauxhall's IR showed an *adversarial* pattern before teamwork, because management and unions saw each other as opposing players, and they continued to act *adversarially* during and after the introduction of teamwork. Both sides might also be described as *anti-incorporate*, because man-

agement wanted to *incorporate* unions into their goals and unions feared *incorporation* would destroy their own interests.

*Incorporation* was a more important issue with the type of *low-trust* IR at Vauxhall where the survival of workers' representation depended on an independent union body (institutional stability); at Opel the works council is guaranteed by the BetrVG law and worker's representation is institutionalised (institutional stability by law). Consequently, Vauxhall's *adversarial frame* of reference and Opel's *pluralist* frame of reference determined not only the process of introducing teamwork, but also the effectiveness of the JPC and the *Lenkungsausschuß*. Opel's works council and Vauxhall's unions negotiated directly with management over the issue of teamwork. The former in a much less suspicious manner because it was more confident of its influence; the latter tentatively and negatively because they distrusted management's expression of pluralism (low-trust).

Both unions, however (IGM and TGWU) did get involved in the process of introducing teamwork by issuing recommendations to their shopfloor representatives on how to deal with the new situation. While IGM focused on organisational issues seeing teamwork as primarily an organisational and production issue, TGWU focused on industrial relations, i.e. the most important issue for it was the general state of IR and the survival of worker's representatives. The TGWU emphasised the role of the union and stewards as important, while IGM saw teamwork as a more neutral issue. Both unions recommendations can be compared. It is interesting to note how the TGWU strategy for introducing teamleaders was implemented in Vauxhall but also how this compared with activities at Opel:

Table 6.9.: Strategies and Activities

TGWU Strategy	Activities at Vauxhall	Activities at Opel:
1. A clear role for the steward: Make sure 'teams' do not remove the stewards' role.	With a decision for a mutual exclusion of a steward's post and teamleader, Vauxhall's unions ensured the sole membership representation through stewards.	Teamwork did not effect the BR, but Opel's workplace representatives were requested to become teamspeakers; teamspeakers assist <i>Vertrauensleute</i> on the shopfloor
2. Keep formality and 'rigid' agreements and procedures: You will be encouraged to be 'informal' - but you need to keep agreements and procedures in place. Ask the company whether its system of financial, legal and ownership, and control system is 'informal'.	Vauxhall's management and unions reached a formal agreement to introduce teamwork. Attempts by management to <i>informally</i> change the role of teamleaders were rejected by unions on the basis of the written agreement, which specifies the role of teamleaders.	The BR and management reached a formal agreement to introduce teamwork. Since 1992, two changes have been made and both were done in the form of written agreements, i.e. amendments to the original agreement.
3. Break the link between 'teams and company survival'	Although the unions believe that Vauxhall can survive without teamwork, the membership clearly saw a link between both as expressed in the survey.	Although the unions believe that Opel can survive without teamwork, the membership clearly sees a link between both as expressed in the survey
4. Widen the debate on 'quality': What does it really mean? What about our interpretation of 'quality'? (investment, control, information, etc.)	Quality, investment, control, information, etc. were not issues for Vauxhall's unions during the period of the research.	Opel's BR is concerned with quality and got involved in issues like investment, control, and information handling between management and workers via teams.
5. Membership awareness:	Before the introduction of teamwork, the TGWU organised meetings with members to discuss teamwork; the narrow vote in the agreement's favour clearly conveys the awareness of the membership.	Neither Opel's BR nor the workplace representatives informed workers before the introduction of teamwork. but the BR participated during plant-wide meetings organised by management.
6. Strengthen union links outside the company: Do not accept an identification of the union as only in that company - keep links with unionists in other companies and with your wider union organisation; you may need them.	During the introduction of teamwork, Vauxhall's unions did not strengthen their links to unions outside the company. However, links to the education department of the TGWU improved because of training programs for teamwork run by the TGWU.	Opel's BR is part of a network of BRs in the German car industry and is therefore well informed about teamwork in other car plants outside of GM-Rüsselsheim as well as outside of GM

This TGWU strategy reflects their suspicion that teamwork will be used by management to dismantle traditional worker's representation and furthermore that workers

will be seduced into a management controlled representative system. The TGWU ensured that the stewards' role was not by-passed and taken away by the creation of teamleaders; the maintenance of an independent union representation was their first priority. However, this anxiety did not affect the law-based works council system at Opel. The effects of these respective positions were contradictory; Vauxhall's stewards ensured their independence by arguing the incompatibility of the role of teamleaders and stewards; Opel's workplace representatives did the opposite; they actively got involved in teamwork initially by trying to take over teamspeakers' roles. When this failed they incorporated teamspeakers into the structure of representation even though this made the role of their workplace representatives more complicated in terms of representing individual workers. It could be argued, however, that workplace representatives were to some degree by-passed at Opel but that this was not as vital to worker's interests as if shop stewards had been by-passed at Vauxhall, because of the existence of a strong external union, IGM and the works council, i.e. an institutionalised system of checks and balance served to maintain worker's representational structures and meant that teamspeakers were not a threat. Opel's works council and Vauxhall's TGWU/AEEU followed the TGWU's recommendation to introduce teamwork with a written agreement. Institutionalised pluralism in Germany protected the management-worker agreement, at Vauxhall management attempted to change teamleader's role without amending the agreement; this was fought by the unions and management had to cancel this plan (*distributive bargaining*). While management's attempt to by-pass unions by implementing a change not agreed with unions was therefore defeated, it indicated to unions, management's willingness to break agreements when it suited them and their intention of undermining the union (institutional instability).

For the TGWU it was important to argue that the link between the development of teamwork and the survival of the company were not the same. They viewed this connection made by management as an echo of the traditional lock-out threat; either co-operate or lose work. Neither Opel's works council nor Vauxhall's unions however

were able to win this argument with workers, who in both companies clearly linked the success and competitive success of the company with teamwork. Quality was another issue that workers accepted was closely connected to company survival at Opel and therefore they were more willing to accept the management definition of company survival than their own representatives. Vauxhall, on the other hand, saw the quality argument as another ploy by management to frighten the workforce. In contrast to this, Vauxhall's workers saw quality issues as of less importance in connection to company success. Unlike Opel's works council, Vauxhall's unions had been traditionally less involved in issues like investment, control and information flow.

In terms of union activities to defend workers' interests Vauxhall's unions took a stronger stance than either the works council or the workplace representatives at Opel. Not only did the TGWU pressurise management for pre-agreement discussions, but members also were able to vote on the agreement. In contrast, there were no union meetings prior to the introduction of teamwork at Opel. Through direct involvement, participation and preparatory meetings, Vauxhall's workers were at least made aware of teamwork issues, while Opel's workers were simply informed of management decisions. During this period of introduction, Vauxhall's TGWU used its contacts to TGWU-stewards at Ellesmere Port and IBC to seek information about teamwork and communicate their findings to the workforce. The union with a strong *adversarial* approach, the TGWU, pointed out the disadvantages of the system to its members; despite the financial incentive, (or "*bribe*") by management to workers, it could be argued that they were successful in this. Additionally, TGWU members of IBC attended meetings at Vauxhall to inform workers on teamwork. While TGWU-stewards utilised their direct contacts with shop stewards from GM's IBC plant in Luton, Opel's works council's generally sought information from IGM and met with works councils from other German GM operations. Again it is interesting to contrast IGM's teamwork recommendations with what actually happened in Vauxhall and Opel:

Table 6.10.: Principles and Activities

IGM's Principles:	Activities at Vauxhall	Activities at Opel:
1. A broad assignment of varying tasks for the group (including long cycle times);	Vauxhall's unions did not reach an agreement to assign tasks to teams, or an extension of cycle time.	Opel's BR did not reach an agreement to assign tasks to a team, or an extension of cycle time.
2. Group competence in decision making in such areas as job rotation, division of the work, quality control, and training needs;	Vauxhall's agreement allows teams to rotate, etc., but teams cannot decide their training needs. Teams rank low on Gulowsen's scale, because little autonomy is given to them.	Opel's agreement allows teams to rotate, etc., but teams at Opel cannot decide their training needs. Teams rank higher on Gulowsen's scale, because more autonomy is given to them.
3. Decentralisation of the plant decision-making structure;	With the agreement decision-making was partly transferred from supervisor to teamleaders.	With the agreement decision-making was partly transferred from supervisor to team-speakers
4. Selection of production organisation and technology suitable for group work (based on decentralised technology and production concepts);	Teamwork did not change production concepts or technology, assembly line work remained unaffected.	Opel's management reversed this, by re-organising cockpit and door production from previous <i>box</i> to <i>line</i> -manufacturing.
5. Equal pay for group members;	No equal pay for team-members was introduced	No equal pay for team-members was introduced
6. Equal opportunity for all, including special training where necessary for the disabled and the socially disadvantaged, to participate in group work (group work as solidaristic work organisation);	Vauxhall's unions did not introduce any clause in their agreement with management regarding disadvantaged workers. Increasingly, such workers were made to leave teams at the assembly line.	Although BR's were able to ensure the position of disabled and disadvantaged in its agreement, in practice disabled and disadvantaged workers were not only made redundant through the retirement program, but were also forced to leave assembly teams.
7. Support for the personal and occupational development of individuals and the group;	Vauxhall's management did not introduce additional training at the door-section, apart from a production related training on the job.	Opel's agreement included training schemes for teamspeakers, but no further training was done, apart from rotation, i.e. training on the job.
8. Regular group meetings, at least one hour per week;	Team-members are required to attend meetings during shift hours. Meetings are rare and off shift.	BR's successfully negotiated regular team-meetings on a weekly basis (1 h). Meetings are rare.
9. Representation of group interests within the established plant system of interest representation;	Besides teamleaders, the group is not represented as a group, but team-members are represented as workers by their elected stewards.	Although IGM's guidelines do not demand an election system for teamspeakers, BR's could ensure that in the agreement and in practice. VPs should be teamspeakers.
10. Voluntary participation in the groups;	Although membership is voluntary, almost everybody joins teams.	Although the agreement states it, it was not used in practice, all workers took part.
11. Pilot projects to test group-work before broader implementation;	Vauxhall's pilot area for teamwork was the door-section.	Opel's BR negotiated pilot projects and monitored them.
12. A joint steering committee at the firm level, with equal labour and management representation, to oversee and co-ordinate the implementation of group work and the activities of the groups.	Management's attempt to introduce a JPC failed IR is handled on a direct, informal and non-institutionalised basis between individual unions and management.	A joint management-BR committee was set up and met regularly every fortnight to discuss developments on final assembly.

The introduction of teamwork involved no major management concessions on changes to production patterns or extensions of cycle times despite union arguments for *humanisation of work* at Opel. Significantly, too, the traditional trade union value of protecting all members of the workforce, particularly the disadvantaged, were completely undermined both at Opel and Vauxhall. While this was treated as a secondary issue, its implications in terms of the defence of industrial trade union rights is significant as was its consequence for traditional trade union concepts of equal representation. Neither shop stewards nor workplace representatives seem to have been able to resist these effects of teamwork. Team autonomy on the other hand was par-

tially negotiated at Opel; it ranks significantly higher on the Gulowsen-scale compared to teams at Vauxhall. At both plants a further decentralisation of decision-making took place, as decisions previously made by supervisors were transferred to teams; middle management was, in effect, reorganised. Again this was implemented most successfully at Opel. However, the fundamental decision on the use of *box* or *line*-manufacturing remained with management at both plants, and in both cases the traditional assembly line was maintained, despite IGM's attempt to influence this issue at Opel.

Although teamwork affected the structure of wages, i.e. a bonus for teamleaders and teamspeakers at both plants and a reduction of wage grades at Opel, team-members did not receive equal pay. Despite IGM's demand for worker's solidarity and unity in the event of attacks on individual worker's rights, disadvantaged workers at both plants were adversely affected and forced out of teams for a variety of reasons. Opel's works council and Vauxhall unions failed to ensure good equal opportunity practice. While management in both plants, despite the union request, did not introduce special training for workers to prepare them for teamwork because of rotation and the on-the-job-training schemes, many workers were able to improve their occupational skills. Although Opel's works council ensured that teams could meet weekly for an agreed time during work hours, in practice this was rarely done. This is best described by a works council-member Franz (1994): *"Teamwork and team-meetings are as if one were two years married without having sex"*. The situation at Vauxhall was similar where the agreement also mentions team-meetings during work time, but such meetings took place on a voluntary basis and after work hours. In both cases, meetings could be cancelled by supervisors to avoid the interruption of production. Opel's agreement was better than Vauxhall's where meetings took place *on shift* and were poorly attended. There is ultimately however little difference between both sites because in both cases meetings were rare in practice.



Opel's works council ensured the incorporation of teamspeakers as part of a democratic structure of representation by suggesting that a) existing workplace representatives be elected and b) that teamspeakers be trained as workplace representatives. Vauxhall's unions did the opposite. Vauxhall's teamleaders are not part of any union organisation, they are seen clearly as management teamleaders appointed by management; the position of stewards, for example, is incompatible with the position of teamleader. Opel's works council opted for an incorporation of teamspeakers (democratic = *pluralist*) and Vauxhall's unions opted for the exclusion of teamleaders (non-democratic = *adversarial*). IGM's request for a *joint steering committee* was successful at Opel; at Vauxhall the JPC did not survive very long and never functioned as a participatory body. In short, *institutionalised IR* (i.e. the setting up of committees) survived in a *pluralist* system and so did its *integrative bargaining* approach while in contrast, institutionalised forms of IR did not survive in an *adversarial* relationship with its *distributive bargaining* approach.

To conclude, Vauxhall's unions and Opel's works council were only partially successful in influencing some aspects of teamwork and this was generally at a low level. However the *pluralist* frame of reference which provided a stable IR system was able to adapt teamwork with advantages to both sides because the works council and IGM's union representatives did not need to focus on securing their existence. In contrast, Vauxhall's unions felt threatened by management's initiatives and felt the need to fight constantly to maintain their position to limit the affects of teamwork on their own representational structure.

### 6.3.3. Teamleader/Teamspeakers, Teams and Representation

The hypothesis (a) *whether a teamleader is appointed or a teamspeaker is elected, s/he will be a new player within participation (industrial democracy) on the shop-*

*floor* can be examined in the light of both interviews and surveys conducted at Opel and Vauxhall. Management at both operations introduced a teamleader/teamspeaker as a new representative layer between team-members and supervisors. Teamleaders/speakers have representative functions on the shopfloor because part of their task is to represent team-members. As a hierarchical function, teamleaders and teamspeakers can be positioned in the following ways when compared to the former supervisor-worker structure:

Table 6.11.: Old and New Structures

Old Structure	Team Structure
Production Manager / Betriebsleiter	Production Manager / Betriebsleiter
Supervisors / Meister	Supervisor / Meister
-----	Teamleader / Teamspeaker
Workers	Workers (team-members)

Although GME requested a flattening of organisational hierarchies to improve communication between the shopfloor and management, both managements actually introduced an additional level of hierarchy with teamleaders/teamspeakers. Management was not interested in addressing hierarchical issues or examining how they affect production line efficiency. They were more interested in introducing a self-regulating, more flexible system of job rotation and quality control on the shopfloor which could be run by workers themselves rather than through a middle management structure. While communication from management to workers was done under the old system through the supervisor, it is now done through teamleaders/teamspeakers. Teamleaders and teamspeakers are different in terms of their leadership role (speaking vs. leading), but also their position; they are positioned between team-members and supervisors (hypothesis d):

Table 6.12.: Supervisors and Team-Members

supervisor	←	teamleaders	teamspeakers	→	team-members
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However teamleaders still tend to take their cues from supervisors and their information from management, teamspeakers, on the other hand, are seen as identifying with the team at Opel. Representation is a crucial question for teamleaders and teamspeakers. This can be expressed in the hypothesis (b): *Whether or not a teamleader is appointed or elected, s/he will be a team and working area representative. Therefore*

*whether appointed or not teamleader/teamspeaker may get into conflict with an elected steward on the issue of: who represents?* Opel's workers elect a three tier system of works councils, workplace representatives, and teamspeakers; i.e. they elect BRs as workers, workplace representatives as union members, and teamspeakers as team-members at Vauxhall workers only have one level of workers representation at the shopfloor level, i.e. their elected stewards. At Opel, elected teamspeakers (13:1) are the closest person to the shopfloor with representative functions, followed closely by workplace representatives (25:1). Crucial for these representation issues is that Vauxhall's teamleaders are generally not stewards and they are unlikely to move over to this position as they are appointed by management through a selection process that would exclude many traditional shop stewards. The survey (question: 25) reveals this identification:

<b>What do you think about your teamleader's position on the union?</b>	<b>Answers:</b>	<b>Vauxhall</b>	<b>Opel</b>
	Too critical	40.7 %	12 %
	Too supportive	1.9 %	40 %
	About right	40.7 %	42 %

More significant is the following question because it determines how team-members see the question (23) of who represents them: *If you thought that you or someone on your team was being subjected to some form of on-the-job harassment or unfair treatment, whom would you most likely turn to get something done?*

<b>Whom to ask:</b>	<b>Vauxhall:</b>	<b>Opel</b>
Your Teamleader/Teamspeaker:	10 %	46 %
Your Union Representative:	82 %	22 %
Your BR:	N/A.	24 %
Your Supervisor:	6 %	6 %
The Personnel Department:	2 %	2 %

Responses at Opel's final assembly support the hypothesis that the teamspeakers at Opel are much more trusted than at Vauxhall whereas in Vauxhall the fundamental alliance is that of shop stewards/workers. Team-members at Opel tend to see elected teamspeakers as representatives (46 %). By contrast, if a teamleader is appointed by management as at Vauxhall, only 10 % would regard him as a true representative. Team-members in both plants see their elected stewards and their workplace representatives/works council as a good source of representation. Neither Opel's or Vauxhall's team-members see supervisors or the personnel department as representing their in-

terests. But whereas Opel's team-members see both their workplace representatives (VPs) and their teamspeakers as agents of representation, Vauxhall workers see their shop stewards as their true representatives.

The teamwork introduced at Opel then supported an existing pluralist representative system; whereas teamwork at Vauxhall is seen as an *adversarial* development by the workforce. A team-concept introduced into an IR system based on a *pluralist* frame of reference led not only to the election of a teamspeaker, but also developed good representative models. A team-concept introduced in an *adversarial frame* of reference resulted in a teamleader that is felt by the workforce to be non-representative and this has created a potential for conflict between stewards, on the one side, and teamleaders/supervisors on the other.

The last hypothesis (f) examines the question of conflict: *Whether or not a teamleader is appointed or elected, the area of conflict may shift more towards the shopfloor level.* While Vauxhall's agreement explicitly mentions conflict and its resolution, Opel's agreement does not even need to mention this, because provision to resolve conflicts are provided by BetrVG and workplace representatives. As a result conflict has not worsened on the shopfloor after the introduction of teamwork. Workplace representatives in fact see the existence of teamspeakers as helpful in resolving particular issues. At Vauxhall however the possibility for conflict between shop stewards and teamleaders is much greater. The relationship between traditional representation and teamleaders/teamspeakers can be shown in a graph:

Table 6.13.: Representation and Management

	Representation		Management
Vauxhall	Shop Steward	→	Teamleader
		→	Supervisor
Opel	BR	→	
	Workplace Representatives	→	Meister
	Teamspeaker	→	

## 6.3.4. Conclusions

Although both plants have introduced so-called teamwork, the sort of *teamwork* introduced should actually be defined as *groupwork*. Neither teams function as autonomous teams because individuals still carry out Tayloristic production tasks and the level of autonomy remains very limited in both cases. The question of appointment or election of teamleaders was determined by different systems of IR (*pluralist* or *adversarial*). Under Opel's *pluralism* and *integrative bargaining* approach, teams at least reach full autonomy on the election of teamspeakers. In Vauxhall's *adversarial* and *distributive bargaining* approach teams have no autonomy because their teamleaders are appointed by management.

Institutionalised IR systems also differed in both plants. While Vauxhall's management attempted to introduce a JPC and failed (low-trust), Opel's *Lenkungsausschuß* played a vital role during the introduction of teamwork (high-trust led to trust building). Unlike Opel, Vauxhall's management tried to use the JPC to *incorporate* unions into their agenda and to threaten them with institutional instability. Out of fear of being *incorporated* into management's agenda, losing their independence or being weakened, unions decided to leave Vauxhall's JPC. Opel's management did not attempt to use the *Lenkungsausschuß* for control purposes because they were more inclined to accept *pluralism*, given the legal basis for democratic representation embodied in the agreements and the law.

During the introduction of teamwork, plant based representation received guidelines from their unions, and when Vauxhall and Opel's team-concepts are measured against these guidelines they have only partially succeeded in implementing the unions' concept of teamwork, which is essentially democratic and devolves more power to workers. Neither union achieved their goals of greater *humanisation* in the production process. Opel's democratic team-concept gave workers the option to elect an addi-

tional form of representation, while Vauxhall's workers had to face additional supervision via management's non-democratic teamleaders.

To conclude, neither *pluralism* nor the *adversarial* approach led to a team-concept in the sense defined by organisational sociology, i.e. accomplishing work related tasks as a coherent group and not as individuals. It also did not lead to a high degree of autonomous decision-making. Both IR systems failed to meet most of the requirements issued by IGM and TGWU. However, the advantage of an IR system within a *pluralist* frame of reference lay in the strengthening of representation and in some degree to more worker participation in the day to day running of the plant, while an IR system based on an *adversarial* understanding not only led to the failure of institutionalised IR, it also made teamleaders appear to be a new management tool, to strengthen management's control, thereby leading to greater possibilities of conflict.

**Chapter**

# 7

## **Conclusions, Summary & Assessments**

## 7. Summary, Conclusions & Assessments

In order to examine the research hypothesis a range of important issues have been examined that have affected industrial democracy and the structure of representation in the motor-car industry. Primarily the study has been a comparative one, with a research design that has allowed for a two-plant, cross-national but one-corporation comparison. The specific issue of the effect of teamwork on shopfloor representation has been particularly analysed. The final summary and conclusion has seven objectives: 1) summarising the original research problem, 2) assessing the models used in the study, 3) linking the research problem to theories of teamwork and representation, 4) summarising the two case studies, 5) evaluating the outcomes of the case studies by using the hypotheses, 6) drawing some final comparative conclusions, 7) assessing the thesis to test their wider validity for IR.

### 7.1. The Research Question

The aim of the study was to assess the research question: *To what extent and in what ways does the institutional context affect the transition from a traditional system of representation to teamwork and how does this affect the general structure of representation?* With the transfer of elements from the Toyota Production System of *lean production* into the European and American car industry, teamwork experienced a renaissance. Its introduction had important implications: the most important being the formation of a new layer of teamleaders/teamspeakers whose representative functions



could interfere with the traditional system of representation (workplace representative and works councils in Germany, shop stewards in Britain).

Two key questions have been addressed: a) How does the relationship between management and traditional workers' representation in a *unitarist*, *pluralist* or *adversarial* frame of reference affect the transition to and implementation of teamwork? What are the outcomes of the transition from a supervisor-workers system to a team-teamleader system? b) How does the emergence of team-members, teamleaders/teamspeakers interact with the traditional system of shop stewards, workplace representatives and works councils and what effect has this had on the structure of representation?

## 7.2. Assessment of the Models

The theoretical model used in this thesis to examine teamwork and the structure of representation at Vauxhall's Luton plant and at Opel's Rüsselsheim plant has been the *triadic* model; this links a pattern of IR systems or approaches and the behaviour of actors (frame of reference). It also establishes a set of characteristics which inform the three different approaches. These *approaches* and *frames of reference* have been described as: *unitarism (collusion)*, *pluralism (integrative bargaining)*, and *adversarialism (distributive bargaining)*. The *triadic approach* has been used as a model not only to describe certain patterns in an IR situation but primarily to enable a comparison. In the present study, the *triadic approach* has successfully been linked to Walton and McKersie's negotiation theory and to the theory of transition in order to examine the change from a *workers-supervisor* system to a *teamwork* system.

These models have proved useful as a device to analyse the possible outcomes of a transition, i.e. to demonstrate how the structure of representation and the type of strategic negotiations (*integrative or distributive bargaining*), establishes the nature of the structure of representation after the introduction of teamwork. In other words, the model provided a useful tool to predict whether a teamwork system would be *non-democratic (distributive bargaining)* or *democratic (integrative bargaining)*. Given the study of the pre-teamwork conditions of IR at Vauxhall and at Opel, the triadic model has proven to have a predicting value. A study of the pre-teamwork IR system provided enough evidence to assign the structure of representation to one of the *triadic* description. After the transition and the introduction of teamwork, the triadic model also provided an analytical background to examine the consequences of teamwork for the structure of representation. As well as examining the way that this determined a non-democratic or a democratic outcome, the model also provided a framework for an analysis of the sort of changes which occurred on the shopfloor with the introduction of democratic teamspeakers and non-democratic teamleaders.

Apart from the success of applying this model, there are significant shortcomings inherent in its use. The non-democratic and democratic model in many ways is not flexible enough to capture the complex reality of IR on the shopfloor. Concepts of unitarism linked to collusion, pluralism linked to *integrative bargaining* and *adversarialism* linked to *distributive bargaining* are often too simplistic to entirely encompass the range of approaches and the contradictions that exist in different IR systems. In addition, the *triadic approach* also sets boundaries which limit the analysis of an IR pattern. IR actors do not constantly behave within the particular triadic model they

are supposed to be using, they often seek a pragmatic accommodation (chapter 2.2.5.), equally patterns of general IR do not fit neatly into one or the other model.

#### a) The *pluralist* approach and Opel's industrial relations

The existence of Opel's works council and workplace representatives within the structure of representation as an *institutionalised* form of IR is clearly *pluralist* operates within a *pluralist* frame of reference and utilising *integrative bargaining* methods. Most of the *integrative bargaining* negotiations apply not only to strictly economic issues, but also to *obligations and rights* (1965:129). Teamwork, according to their definition, is an issue for negotiations about *obligations and rights*. While issues related to economic values (*distributive bargaining*) are negotiated outside of workplaces (chapter 5.1.2.) in the German case. The *pluralist* model which leads to *integrative bargaining*, then, has proved to be helpful in explaining both the transitional events and the final more democratic outcome. However, it has also had limitations. An IR system which is based on *pluralism* assumes that institutionalised forms of industrial democracy are successful and that trust can be established, i.e. joint meetings, works councils, etc. and that a goal of a balance of power is achieved. The degree of representation given to workers in this *pluralist* approach, however is still extremely limited e.g. Opel's groups are not teams, i.e. their power is limited and they have little co-decision making powers. While a *pluralist* model allows institutions (works council, etc.) to prevent strikes and solve issues with an *integrative bargaining* approach, it was not effective in stopping, for example, the strike at Opel's paint shop. Before the strike, Opel's management demonstrated how quickly it could move back into an *adversarial* approach from a *pluralist* IR approach towards an *adversarial* IR position, by attacking the works councils directly, i.e. the cancellation of works

agreements. In the words of Walton and McKersie, Opel's management ceased to negotiate according to the *integrative bargaining* model and move into a *distributive bargaining* model. Given the *pluralist* approach to IR at Opel, works councils and workplace representatives should have sought to negotiate with management using an *integrative bargaining* mechanism, but when workplace representatives felt strongly that *pluralism* was not working for them (low-trust) and decided on industrial action, they broke with the *pluralist* form of problem-solving and moved towards an *adversarial* one.

Walton and McKersie's model of *distributive bargaining* is an example of one of the options most utilised in an *adversarial* relationship. In the case of the strike it might be justified to argue that the action of Opel's management and the reaction of Opel's workplace representatives used a *distributive bargaining* model. While being on strike, Opel's works council changed their approach to negotiations with management moving to a situation which can be described as *integrative bargaining*. At the same time workplace representatives fell back on on the *distributive bargaining* model ("one person's gain is a loss to the other" 1965:4) when they felt that pluralist model was not working. Walton and McKersie (1965) have predicted that such a situation can be categorised as a mixed *distributive and integrative bargaining* position. The mix of both bargaining system in fact provides *checks and balances* so that, if one aspect breaks down, another come into play. Opel's IR system in fact provided a more complex system than can simply be described as pluralist.

In short, Fox' and Moore's models have advantages but also have shortcomings when applied to IR situations in both Opel and Vauxhall. In the event of a strike, for exam-

ple, Opel's IR system proved to be both *pluralist* and *adversarial* patterns at the same time. While a triadic approach is useful as a general scheme or framework it needs continuous refinements when applied to the changing and complex situations of IR.

#### b) The *adversarial* approach and Vauxhall's industrial relations

The study of Vauxhall's IR system provided strong analogies with Fox' *adversarial* model. The use of an *adversarial* frame of reference by Vauxhall's union representatives and management demonstrated that the overall IR system can be described as *adversarial*. The *adversarial frame* of reference is based on a set of assumptions that reject the idea of participation and the possibility of using institutions to establish of industrial democracy; it is a low-trust relationship. Vauxhall's shop stewards showed a willingness to participate on the *Joint Plant Committee* (JPC) before and during the introduction of teamwork (*integrative bargaining*). Typical for the *adversarial* approach of Vauxhall's management towards the union in the JPC was their "attempt to destroy or weaken the other side" (Purcell 1981:55) by trying to reduce the number of stewards. This led to institutional insecurity for the union which provided the substance of further problems (Walton and McKersie 1965:136).

Given the *adversarial* or *anti-incorporatist frame* of reference of management and a *core-group* of trade unionists with a strong influence on strategy, it was difficult to move towards a pluralist or high-trust approach. The rejection of teamwork by stewards on the shopfloor was based on their perception that teamwork was a management manoeuvre to undermine their representative power (one person's gain is a loss to the other). Certainly management's attempt to move towards a *pluralist* frame of reference, i.e. of an *integrative bargaining* position failed. Despite the subsequent

failure of the JPC for a considerable time Vauxhall's workers representatives and management continued to operate with both an *adversarial* and a *pluralist* model in a mixed negotiation system (*integrative and distributive bargaining*).

In summary, both case studies show the limitations of the triadic model. Not only do actors within a model use patterns of behaviour from different models at different times, but they also use patterns and frames of reference from different models at the same time. As a consequence the IR model of the *triadic approach* can provide a useful framework for research into two different IR systems (Opel and Vauxhall), but its limitations have to be taken into account. The reality of IR systems can be seen as being much more complex than a simple *unitarist, pluralist, and adversarial frame* of reference suggests.

### 7.3. The Theory of Teamwork and Industrial Democracy

In this thesis, teams, teamwork, team leadership, participation and representation are seen in the context of a theoretical debate developed to analyse and understand the social aspects of a transition from one social system to another. Moore's (1966) theory of transitions and Walton and McKersie (1965) collective bargaining models are useful in that both contain predicative features. A change in the social organisation of production (towards a *team-teamleader* system) can be seen as a transition. The theoretical system of Fox, Walton and McKersie and Moore have been used in the area of IR to analyse the transition from a *supervisor-worker* system to a *team-teamleader* system:

Table 7.1.: Transition and Outcome

Supervisor - Worker System		
↓		
Team - Teamleader		
↓	↓	↓
<i>adversarial</i>	unitarist	pluralist
Non-Democratic Outcome Appointed Teamleader	Democratic Outcome Elected Teamspeaker	Non-Democratic Outcome Appointed Teamleader

Once an IR system can be identified showing a *unitarist*, *pluralist* or *adversarial* *frame* of reference seems it is possible to predict a democratic or non-democratic outcome. However none of the *boxes* should be seen as closed, because there are variations within each IR system and there are variations within the selection methods for teamleaders/teamspeakers. None of the *ideal* boxes were found in their pure form in reality, e.g. while in the triadic model, theoretical categories are useful in practice they cannot be simply applied.

#### a) Unitarism and teamleaders

A transition from a supervisor-worker to a *team-teamleader* system can occur in an IR system which is *unitarist* and uses a system of negotiations that can be described as *collusive* (Walton and McKersie 1965:188). Such an IR system is based on the assumption that management has *the right to manage* and workers should be *loyal* to management; this results in a selection of teamleaders that can be called *authoritarian*; teamleaders are not elected, but appointed by management and are selected according to management criteria. As a consequence, the leadership style tends to be autocratic and teamleaders operate in a teamleader *tells*, *sells*, or *tests* style. In the *tells* version, a teamleader simply *tells* team-members and in the *sells* version s/he sells ideas, etc. to team-members, but has no final decision making power. In the *unitarist* system, works

councils end up *isolated* from the workforce and *ignored* by management; workplace representatives tend to adapt a *populist role* rather than a political representative one. Negotiations in the sense of collective bargaining either do not take place at all or in a collusive mode. In summary, a *unitarist* approach does not lead to a democratic version of teamwork and cannot move IR closer to *pluralism*.

### b) Pluralism and teamspeakers

An IR system can also show indicators that can be described as *pluralist*, i.e. pluralist forms of institutionalised IR which negotiates in an *integrative bargaining* mode. This is a *high-trust* system. In this case, the selection of teamleaders is democratic and elected teamspeakers tend to adapt a leadership style associated with a teamspeaker *consults* and *joins* style. Within this system of *pluralism*, works councils are *respected, stable* and *co-operative* (Kotthoff 1982). In short, once an IR system on the shopfloor features *pluralism*, the IR system is likely to continue its *pluralist approach* with the election of teamspeakers and will attempt to avoid *adversarial* confrontations. Management equally works through a system in which workers' views are collected and mediated.

### c) Adversarialism and teamleaders

One indicator for the existence of an *adversarial* relationship is the use of the *distributive bargaining* mode because both sides reject the notion of participation and institutionalised forms of IR. It is likely that the question of teamleaders' selection is left to management. In such an *adversarial* relationship between management and workers' representatives, there is a low-trust attitude between the two sides. Since teamleaders in an *adversarial frame* of reference are likely to be appointed by man-



agement they tend to adapt the same leadership style as in a *unitarist* frame of reference.

## 7.4. The Case Studies of Teamwork

Participation by workers' representatives during the introduction of teamwork showed, that in an *adversarial* case, representatives either did not participate at all or only minimally (low-trust). While in the *pluralist* system full participation occurred during the period of introduction. At Opel, the *Lenkungsausschuß* was a success story with intense participation by the works council and workplace representatives, because it was a institution with a degree of high-trust between both sides and strongly favoured an *integrative bargaining* approach to teamwork. While Vauxhall's Joint Plant Committee (JPC) was used by management in an attempt to incorporate unions into their agenda, this subsequently failed, because it failed to create trust between the two sides. Management's attempt to reduce the number of shop stewards created what Walton and McKersie have described as *institutional instability*. Eventually, the issue of *out-sourcing* of production divided management and unions; management felt that this was exclusively a management decision while unions felt they should be involved in a co-decision-making way. Further co-operation was rejected by the unions which ended the attempt at a *pluralist* approach at Vauxhall. On the basis of the *normative* or state supported pluralism (BetrVG) at Opel and management's attempt to reduce the number of stewards at Vauxhall, the issue of insitutional security (Walton and McKersie 1965:136) was a problem for the TGWU and AEEU, but not for Opel's works council.

## 7.5. Outcomes and Hypotheses

Out of the two key research questions, the following hypotheses were developed as a guideline to study teamwork and its affects on the structure of representation:

- 
- a) Whether or not a teamleader is elected or appointed, a teamleader will be a new player within participation (Industrial democracy) on the shopfloor.
  - b) Whether or not a teamleader is appointed or elected, s/he will be a team and working area representative. Therefore an elected or appointed teamleader may get into conflict with an elected steward and/or an elected BR on the issue of: who represents?
  - c) A teamspeaker who is elected, is more likely to solely represent a team, because a teamleader can be voted out. A teamleader who is appointed by the company, represents the team's interest and the company's interest at the same time.
  - d) Whether an elected teamspeaker represents a team, a teamleader may be a representative against the company in the case of conflict. On the other hand, if a teamleader is appointed by the company, s/he may be used against the workers in the case of conflict.
  - e) Whether or not a teamleader is appointed or elected, a new form of workers control on the shopfloor may result.
  - f) Whether or not a teamleader is appointed or elected, the area of conflict may shift more towards the shopfloor level.
- 

Out of the research question *To what extent and in what ways does the institutional context affect the transition from a traditional system of representation to teamwork and how does this affect the general structure of representation?* Several hypotheses (see box) were developed (a-f).

### Hypothesis a)

The case studies at Vauxhall and Opel have shown that with the introduction of teamwork, teamleaders and teamspeakers were introduced as new players on the shopfloor. As the table on (question: 16): *Teamleaders and Team-Members* demonstrates, there is a recognition by team-members of the teamleaders' role. For example, 41.7 % of the German team-members said that their teamspeakers respected them *all the time*, while only 16.7 % of British team-members said their teamleaders respected them *all the time*. In addition, 38 % of German team-members said the teamspeaker co-operated with them *all the time* while only 9.3 % of British team-members agreed with this. Analysing both teamwork agreements on the issue of continuous improve-

ment of work standards (KVP), teamleaders/teamspeakers in both plants became the channel for information between management and workers. Teamleader/teamspeakers also organised team-meetings and participated in the organisation of work patterns. They were also seen as part of a legitimate IR system; team-members felt they could turn to them in cases of unfair treatment. In summary, teamleaders and teamspeakers are a new player on the shopfloor who not only actively participate on work related issues, but are also seen as having some sort of limited steward/workplace representative function; they are perceived by team-members as having a role to play in industrial democracy.

### Hypothesis b)

According to the analysis of the case studies, representation changed with the introduction of teamleaders/teamspeakers. At Vauxhall, teamleaders are perceived as less representative of the workforce than at Opel. In other words, elected teamspeakers are felt to be true representatives, while appointed teamleaders are not seen in the same light. At Opel almost 50 % of team-members see teamspeakers as someone to turn to for representation, while this is the case for only 10 % of Vauxhall's team-members. While Vauxhall's team-members do not get confused about who represents them (for them it is still clearly the traditional structures), i.e. shop stewards, Opel's team-members see their teamspeakers as representatives equal to their workplace representatives (46 %). This has not led to a confusion at Opel over the issue of representation, because teamspeakers seem to assist workplace representatives (VPs) in their representative function. Opel's workplace representatives are confident that the sort of *job-sharing* of workplace representatives and teamspeakers which has emerged after teamwork is effective. A different level of issues are still dealt with by

workplace representatives or works councils, however, but minor issues are solved directly at team level by elected teamspeakers. In the case of workplace representatives their role has merged to some degree with that of teamspeakers; in the case of shop stewards it is clearly separate from teamleaders.

The questionnaire results seem to confirm Smith et al.'s theory of leadership styles. Opel's elected teamspeakers are bound to use a *pluralist* leadership style, i.e. a teamspeaker *consults* or *joins*, while an appointed teamleader is able to adapt a non-democratic leadership, i.e. a teamleader *tells*, *sells*, or *tests*.

In summary, the issue of representation is clear for Vauxhall's workers, because, as actors in an IR system, they see their interest clearly represented by their stewards. At Opel, team-members seek representation from their teamspeakers in the first place and if a problem remains unsolved, seek additional help from workplace representatives and works councils. In short, neither in an *adversarial* nor a *pluralist* framework has the issue of teamwork led to confusion over the question: who represents?

### Hypothesis c)

Since Opel's teamspeakers are elected, their legitimacy depends on team approval and accountability therefore they have to represent the interest of their team; Vauxhall's appointed teamleaders do not rely on team support but depend on management approval. In one case, for example, at Vauxhall's door section, team-members almost refused to acknowledge an appointed teamleader because he was seen as too closely associated with management. The representative legitimacy of teamleaders or teamspeakers emerges from the results of the questionnaire. According to 42.6 % of

Vauxhall's team-members, management-appointed teamleaders think more like management, while only 8.7 % of Opel's team-members believe that their team-speakers think like management. 52.2 % of team-members at Opel think that teamspeakers never think like management, compared to 11.1 % at Vauxhall. The results support the hypothesis that an elected teamspeaker is more likely to identify with the team and have the team identify with them than those who are appointed by management.

#### Hypothesis d)

Given that elected teamspeakers differ in their loyalties to appointed teamleaders, the question of loyalty also influences the issue of representation in the case of conflict. Teamspeakers who have teams as their basis of legitimacy are likely to support their team or their team-members in the case of conflict; teamleaders who have management as their basis of legitimacy are likely to be loyal to management in a similar situation. Responses to the survey question concerning management's policy on union representation show that 70 % of Opel's team-members thought that in the case of conflict, teamspeakers would side with the team. Only 26 % of Vauxhall's team-members felt that teamleaders would side with them in the case of conflict. Consequently, an IR system based on an *adversarial frame* of reference tends to lead to an *adversarial* relationship between team-members and teamleaders. Teamleaders then tend to pursue an *adversarial* leadership style (tells, sells, and tests) leading to an alignment of teamleaders with management in the case of conflict. Elected teamspeakers in an IR system based on a *pluralist* frame of reference, can pursue a democratic leadership style (consults, joins) leading to the alignment of teamspeakers with team-members in the case of conflict. Consequently, the outcome of leadership styles and teamleaders' or

teamspeakers' alignment with management or team-members is based on the existing IR system and the nature of this system will shape the type of teamwork that results.

### Hypothesis e)

Teamspeakers who are part of a team and adapt a democratic leadership style see the question of control as minor because they themselves are team-members with speaker functions and they believe team-members to be in control. In an IR system which is based on *pluralism*, control is not as important an issue as in a system based on *adversarialism*. However, control in *pluralistic* teamwork can be seen as a more subtle control of the sort Barker (1993:412) described; that is, control inside and by the team itself, called *concertive control* (i.e. workers policing each others). Control in an *adversarial* system is clearly external control through management, supervisors and technical systems (R. Edwards' 1981, chapter 2.2.3.). Teamleaders who are management appointed tend to adapt an autocratic leadership style, hence the question of hierarchical control is more important. In addition, the control function of supervisors are weakened and transferred to teamleaders. In short, control is not as vital an issue for the teamspeaker in a *pluralist* system as it seems to be for a management that operates in an *adversarial mode*. In Opel's *pluralist* system, external control is reduced as the task and number of supervisors and their role is reduced, while *concertive control* increases. In *adversarialism*, control also seems to be reduced by the reduction of supervisors, but this is compensated for by the establishment of a teamleader with control functions, whose basis for legitimacy is management. In the IR systems based on a *pluralist* frame of reference (Opel) control is further reduced, while in an IR system based on an *adversarial frame* of reference control moves closer to the shop-floor, i.e. by the establishment of teamleaders with control functions.

### Hypothesis f)

Management at Vauxhall and Opel initially saw that one of the advantages of teamwork was its ability to solve conflicts directly on the shopfloor. Therefore, both teamwork systems are designed to enable teams to solve problems without the intervention of *outsiders*, i.e. either supervisors or trade unions. Team-meetings are seen as a forum to solve not only production problems, but also IR problems. However, because in both cases team-meetings are not operated according to the agreements, i.e. are either rarely held (Opel) or held in work time (Vauxhall) there is no forum in which the team can really address various issues or conflicts that arise. As a result, team-meetings do not function as a problem-solving forum.

IR at Vauxhall, compared to IR at Opel, has always focused on actors on the shopfloor because of the importance of shop stewards. With the introduction of teamwork, this did not change significantly. However, because of the legal requirements of Opel's IR, many issues had to remain at management-works council level. While teamwork did not change either IR system in terms of the place of conflict resolution, Opel's structure of representation seems more capable, at a certain level, of problem-solving on the shopfloor than Vauxhall's. At Opel, 46 % of the team-members see teamspeakers as someone to turn to in the case of problems, while this is only the case for 10 % of Vauxhall's team-members. Given teamspeakers' close relationship to the team at Opel and their leadership style, their ability to solve problems within the team is structurally given. On the other hand, conflicts between teamleaders and team-members are to a much lesser degree resolved by teamleaders at Vauxhall. In other words, Vauxhall's *adversarial* system is set up to in such a way that conflicts continue to be resolved outside of teams through traditional representatives mode, i.e. trade

unionism. However, conflict-solving cannot be seen as purely team-based at Opel and union-based at Vauxhall, because some levels of conflict at Vauxhall may still be resolved within teams and some levels of conflict at Opel can only be resolved by workplace representatives or at works council level. The introduction of teamwork did not replace Opel's structure of representation, because only minor problems are solved inside teams.

Having analysed and compared all six (a-f) hypotheses, it seems as if the outcome of a *pluralist* approach to IR leads to a *pluralist* concept of teamwork which in turn leads to a democratic version of team leadership with an increased potential for conflict resolution. An IR system which indicates the presence of an *adversarial frame* of reference tends to introduce an *adversarial* version of teamwork leading to an authoritarian leadership style with a reduced capacity for problem-solving.

## 7.6. Comparative Conclusions

This thesis has been concerned with the question of representation when teamwork is introduced. It seems there are two different outcomes of a transition from a *worker-supervisor* system to *teamwork*: a) the non-democratic outcome (cf. *adversarial* approach with *distributive bargaining* model of negotiations; or the *unitarist* approach with *collusion* model of negotiations) or b) democratic (*pluralist* using an *integrative bargaining* approach). While a *unitarist* or an *adversarial frame* of reference leads to



an appointed teamleader, only an IR system based on a *pluralist* frame of reference leads to an outcome where a democratically elected teamspeakers is chosen.

Several theories have provided tools to transfer the results of both cases studies to a wider arena of IR. However, teamwork and representation and the transition from a worker-supervisor system to a teamwork system cannot be adequately explained by using a single theory. Theories of IR (Fox, Cressey, Purcell, etc.) enabled the transfer of case study results beyond a study of organisational issues. Equally important, however, has been Walton and McKersie's theory of bargaining behaviour which gave a framework for the prediction of outcomes. In addition, Kotthoff's theory of the role of works councils and Batstone et al.'s theory of the role of shop stewards provided further theoretical ground to understand the two case studies and the IR actors. While Opel's IR system became even more democratised with the election of teamspeakers, Vauxhall's IR system remained within the limitations of *adversarialism*. In other words, teamwork in both cases had a reinforcing function, it reinforces and stabilises both IR system.

## 7.7. General Assessments

Fox's triadic model of IR linked with a theory of collective bargaining and transition provides a tool to analyse teamwork and the structure of representation. To assess the model (a), its power for predictions (b) and its limitations (c) have to be considered. Therefore the following section will:

- a) assess the model by using studies of: a1) teamleaders and team-speakers, a2) non-democratic outcomes, a3) democratic outcomes;
- b) the possibilities of making predictions, including: b1) a theoretical assessment;
- c) the limitations of making such predictions, including: c1) variations within a national IR system, c2) variations within a company-based IR system and c3) national and company systems of IR, c4) unitarist, pluralist and adversarial systems of IR, c5) space for contingency and c6) probabilities.

The general assessment will provide a discussion about the models used to analyse Vauxhall and Opel beyond both cases.

### a) Case Studies

The thesis provides two depth case studies. In addition to the Vauxhall and Opel plants, teamwork was introduced in all of GM's European motor-car plants and in other motor-car companies. In order to examine the strength and weaknesses of the triadic model, GM's Eisenach plant (chapter 2.2.4.; 4; 4.2.; 4.2.2.) is used as a comparative example, because this plant operates within GME and within the German IR system, but still provides a somewhat unusual case to other German plants. Like Rover (chapter 2.1.1.2.; 2.2.4.) however, as a non-GM plant, has a different approach towards teamwork, because Rover's team-concept was influenced by its link to

Honda. Like Rover, Opel-Eisenach's team-concept was influenced by GM's Canadian management team (Suzuki-GM joint-venture). In short, both Rover and Opel-Eisenach provide somewhat unusual cases in the European motor-car industry and therefore provide almost ideal examples for an assessment of the model used in the thesis.

## **Opel-Eisenach:**

### **I. The West-German Labour Law comes to Eastern-Germany**

As mentioned in chapter 2.2.4. and 4.2, Opel's Eisenach plant is a green-field operation. Until November 1989 East-German IR was organised very differently from Western concepts, but with political transformation and anticipation of unification with West German institutions were introduced. "In the first weeks following 1989, the GDR's [former East-Germany] trade unions continued working on the basis of the old collective bargaining system. However, it soon became apparent that a shift to the West-German system was inevitable. The first State Treaty (*Staatsvertrag*) on 18 May, 1990, applied the basic principles of West German labour law to the GDR. These principles have been in force since 1 July, 1990" (Bispinck 1995:63). The West-German labour law includes the works constitution act (BetrVG). Unlike Western works councils with their long tradition of a pluralist understanding of industrial relations, East-German works councils were new in every respect. In East-Germany many works councils were created in many establishments before the works constitution act was formally introduced to East-Germany. On the basis of Germany's *normative* or *state supported* pluralism (BetrVG), those Eastern works councils which were elected before the BetrVG had to accommodate to the legal margins of pluralism.

## **II. General Motors Opens a New Plant**

In September 1992, GM began producing cars near East-Germany's former *Wartburg* production site with a completely new plant. GM did not employ many of the old Wartburg workforce and started instead with 1,200 new workers as a green-field operation. Workers for the new plant were assessed and employed by Opel-Eisenach and received "lean production"-preparation in a state funded training centre in Eisenach. To secure state funding for the creation of a new business in Eastern Germany, GM decided to keep Opel-Eisenach as an independent business unit of GME. Eisenach started not only with a complete new production concept which was different from West-German production, but also with a new IR concept. GM was able to introduce a new IR concept, because a) the West-German labour law had just arrived in Eastern Germany and b) the works council was active with setting up their own structure.

## **III. The Works Council and Unionism**

While Opel's Western employees have established traditional forms of unionism (IGM) and in-plant representation via workplace representatives and *Blockies*, Opel-Eisenach's workers and the members of the works council barely knew each other. Therefore, a system of representation via unions (*distributive bargaining*) could not have been established (Skocpol 1987) in the early 1990s, because none of the former East-German unions survived the transformation of 1989/90. The West-German works councils could not influence the setting up of the plant, because Opel-Eisenach was legally a separate business not connected to GM-West Germany. Opel-Eisenach's first works council was elected in March 1991 by the newly employed workforce working partly in the training centre and partly setting up the new production. The second election took place in March 1992, because of the doubling of the number of

employees (interview: Böckel 1993). During a strike in February 1993 (Bispinck 1995:67), workplace representatives were set up at Eisenach. The creation of workplace representatives facilitated the move of the relationship between management and workers towards the West-German pluralist model.

#### IV. Industrial Relations in Practice

Given the lack of any tradition of pluralism and the newly composed works council faced with an experienced management from the West (including CAMI/Canada), Eisenach's works council operated in a manner akin to Walton and McKersie's term "*collusion*". Within the German system of *normative pluralism*, there is room for manoeuvring towards adversarialism or unitarism. Members of Eisenach's works council were not able to participate on joint-works council meetings of all Western GM plants (Rüsselsheim, Kaiserslautern, Bochum).

In the early 1990s, East-German works councils were forced into a position which comes close to the unitarist approach: a) Through re-structuring plants towards a modern and capitalist production, works councils were forced to support the existence and survival of plants as their prime objective. b) Unions and works council were faced with up to 50 % unemployment in the Eisenach area. c) Although works council and IGM wanted to reach the wage level of West-German workers, this could only be done over a time period, which had to be negotiated with management. d) The re-structuring of production at Opel-Eisenach was done in a lean production fashion to which works council largely agreed. Kreißig (1992:618) use the term *Notgemeinschaft* (Partnership in adversity or for mutual survival) and Mickler et al. (1994:274) use the term *Existenzsicherungspartnerschaft* (co-management) to de-

scribe the relationship between East-German works councils and management. The term *Existenzsicherungspartnerschaft* describes a relationship of merging interests, i.e. to secure the survival of the plant, in a rather unitarist way; a works council becomes an assistant to management (co-management). The relationship between Eisenach's works council and management did not seem to depart from this (Buteweg 1995:27).

### **Rover:**

As mentioned in chapter 2.1.1.2. and 2.2.4. Rover is somewhat different from Vauxhall's Luton plant. In 1992 Rover's IR changed fundamentally with the introduction of the agreement "Rover Tomorrow". With the arrival of Japanese cars in the small and medium size market and especially since the opening of production by Nissan in Sunderland and Toyota in Derby, Rover faced increased competition in a segment of the market traditionally associated with Rover's product range. Therefore, Rover was in a need for a change of product quality and production. This was linked to a change in the social organisation on the shopfloor. The agreement, then, introduced many of the lean production features as well as Japanese management techniques on the basis of Rover's link to Honda.

While Rover's industrial relations system was traditionally seen as leaning towards *adversarialism*, Honda's IR system in Japan and in the USA can be adequately described as being unitarist in its character. While collective bargaining at Rover traditionally took place within a *distributive bargaining* approach, Rover's collective bargaining pattern in the 1990s tended toward *collusion*. Traditionally and like many other motor-car plants in Britain, Rover's shopfloor workers are organised by:

TGWU (production workers) and AEEU (skilled workers). While the TGWU could be seen as an representative of a more adversarial tendency towards IR with a *distributive bargaining* approach, the AEEU represents a more pluralist approach and has a tendency to favour a collective bargaining approach within the margins of *integrative bargaining*. Already before the introduction of the “Rover Tomorrow” agreement, both unions met to discuss management’s proposal for the change towards lean production, which moved the TGWU towards pluralism. Most of management proposals were made with the assistance of Honda. Together with Rover’s white-collar union (MSF), all unions accepted the “Rover Tomorrow” agreement.

While AEEU and MSF saw the agreement as a departure from the adversarial “us and them”, TGWU members were more reluctant to move towards pluralist IR. Rover’s management with the assistance of Honda moved the IR system towards pluralism by an active and successful attempt to include the unions in decision-making. In short, when faced with a) an increased competition through the arrival of Japanese cars, b) Japanese production in Britain, c) Honda as partner of Rover, d) the acceptance of “Rover Tomorrow” by AEEU and MSF, the TGWU moved towards pluralism when offered by Rover’s management in the early 1990s.

### a1) Teamleaders and Teamspeakers

Teamwork at Opel-Rüsselsheim (elected teamspeakers) differs substantially from the approach taken at Opel-Eisenach (appointed teamleaders). Both companies operate within the German IR system, while GM-West has established institutionalised forms of industrial democracy (cf. works councils, etc.), Opel’s Eisenach plant was a transplant and set up before the workforce was employed and a works council was elected.

In other words, Eisenach's teamwork was introduced at a time when the relationship between management and the works council can be described as unitarist with a *collusive* approach towards collective bargaining, therefore the appropriate way in which teamleaders were selected was the appointment model. However, with the merger of Opel-Eisenach with the West-German Opel plants (by the mid-1990s), demands from the works council at GM Western plants are made to move towards an elections system for team-speakers. This coincides with an increased self-confidence of Opel-Eisenach's works council and the move towards pluralism.

Rover, on the other hand, operated an IR system showing patterns of pluralism in the early 1990s. Rover's negotiations for the introduction of teamwork took place in a collective bargaining mode which could be described as *integrative bargaining*. This allowed Rover's management and unions to create a more trustful relationship. The outcome of this newly created trust-relationship between management and unions gave both sides the option of a partly democratic system of the selection of teamleaders. With the introduction of teamwork, workers were able to apply for the position of teamleaders. Candidates had to pass assessments and tests by management. The candidates who remained (usually two to three per team) could stand for election for the position of teamleaders by the teams. Although the relationship between management and unions can be seen as pluralist, it was not stable enough to allow the pure election model. Coming from an unitarist position, Honda favoured the classical Japanese appointment model for teamleaders, while the TGWU from their adversarial standpoint also favoured an appointment model for teamleaders as a TGWU policy towards teamleaders in the motor-car industry. It could be argued that the bloc between Honda (unitarist) and TGWU (adversarial) was overcome by Rover's manage-



ment and the AEEU's move towards pluralism. As demonstrate in several table on the triadic approach (5.6; 5.7.; 5.11.; 5.12; and 5.13. etc.), within the triadic approach, Honda's, Rover's (chapter 2.1.1.2. and 2.2.4.), Opel-Eisenach's (chapter 4 and 4.2), the works council's, the AEEU, the MSF, and the TGWU's move towards a pragmatic accommodation (chapter 2.2.5.) can be seen in the following way:

**Table 7.2.: Pragmatic Accommodation: Rover & Opel-Eisenach**

unitarist	pluralist	adversarial
Eisenach' management (1992) → Eisenach's works council (1992) → Eisenach's management and works council (1995)		
<hr/> Honda's management (1990) →		
	MSF →      AEEU Rover's management & unions (1995)	← Rover's management (1990) ← TGWU
unitarist	pluralist	adversarial

## a2) non-democratic Outcomes

In the case of IR, a system that operates in an *adversarial* frame of reference with a *distributive bargaining* style of regulation before the change towards teamwork is unlikely to lead to a democratic IR system with *integrative bargaining* pattern. Whether or not an IR system shows patterns of a *unitarist* or an *adversarial frame* of reference, *both* actors operate in a non-democratic way. Industrial democracy is an alien concept to an *adversarial* or an *unitarist* relationship. Within such a system, neither side attempts to find democratic solutions for micro or temporary problems. A transitional period would seem to give an opportunity to change to a different IR model. However, within an adversarial model neither management nor workers' representatives are strong enough to force the other side into institutionalised mode of problem-solving (cf. *integrative bargaining*). The prospects for a mutually agreed, planned form of industrial relations are minimal (Purcell 1981:229). Within the *adversarial distributive bargaining* approach, both sides block each other and "neither side

is prepared to risk the first move” (Purcell 1981:229). Within a *unitarist* and collusive relationship management and workers’ representatives’ power relation is asymmetric resulting in unilateral decision-making by management.

IR systems that are based on an *adversarial* or a *unitarist* frame of reference do not tend to set up institutionalised forms of representation, and consequently when teamwork is introduced it is non-democratic; none of the IR actors behave in a participative approach. Within a *unitarist* frame of reference, management has the power to determine the selection method for teamleaders without the interference of workers’ representatives, because they are either excluded or collude. This is done through the appointment of teamleaders. As far as the question of elected or appointed teamleaders is concerned, within an *adversarial* arrangement, neither management nor workers’ representatives have the power to determine the selection method for teamleaders. In contrast to a *pluralist* frame of reference, neither side seeks a democratic arrangement; both sides remain within a low-trust *us vs. them* pattern.

### a3) democratic Outcomes

An election of team-speakers is likely in a system with a high degree of trust and an *integrative bargaining* pattern. Within an *integrative bargaining* system, unions and management have the option to reach their goals, i.e. the introduction of teamwork in such a way so that “they can be accommodated by the same means” (Walton and McKersie 1965:136). The democratic selection of team-speakers is seen by management as transferring democracy to workers leading to a high-trust relationship on the shopfloor, a high degree of legitimacy and acceptance of the team-concept. While

unions/works councils see the election as an option to increase industrial democracy on the workplace and the introduction of an additional level of representation.

Any IR system based on *pluralism* must have industrial democracy and institutionalised forms of participation. In such a system, IR issues such as teamwork are discussed within *integrative bargaining* with institutions like works councils and sometimes with newly created institutions like Opel's *Lenkungsausschuß*. *Pluralism* in conjunction with an *integrative bargaining* system does not determine an outcome, but does set up institutionalised forms of IR to discuss issues. A *pluralist* frame of reference in most cases enhances workers' participation on the introduction of teamwork and influences decisions on the selection methods for teamspeakers.

## b) Possibilities for Predictions

Only in a few cases, has an IR system with a *pluralist* frame of reference introduced a non-democratic selection method for teamleaders (cf. GM-Eisenach). However, GM-Eisenach also have institutionalised forms of industrial democracy for the introduction of teamwork. These forms of industrial democracy are committees similar to Opel's *Lenkungsausschuß* (joint committees). In other words, it is reasonable to predict a democratic version of teamwork with a participative approach during the introduction of teamwork (cf. *Lenkungsausschuß*) resulting in the election of teamspeakers.

Consequently, it can be predicted, with some confidence, that if an IR system is *pluralist*, the introduction of teamwork and the selection method for teamleaders will most likely be democratic and includes: a) the introduction or use of institutionalised forms of industrial democracy through the process of *integrative bargaining* and b)

the *election* of teamspeakers as a form of industrial democracy on the shopfloor. It is even more probable that an IR system displaying an *unitarist* or *adversarial* patterns is not likely to have institutions that create industrial democracy that operate with an *integrative bargaining* approach. The predicted outcome is non-democratic: a) the introduction of teamwork on management terms without participation by workers' representatives and b) the *appointment* of teamleaders.

### b1) Theoretical Assessments

The combination of a theory of transitions and Fox' *triadic approach* (cf. chapter 3, Hyman 1994a:167) with Walton and McKersie's collective bargaining model can move the *triadic approach* closer to the development of an IR theory to explain certain phenomena and predict future outcomes.

These models are particularly useful in a comparative study. While the theory of transition is developed by analysing societies, Fox's IR model is based on the study of different IR systems and Walton and McKersie's theory is based on the study of 10 cases of collective bargaining behaviour. All not only assist the analysis of IR phenomena, but also the comparability of different IR systems. A theoretical analytical framework for a comparative IR study provides a sufficient device because not only does it structure each case study in a similar way, but it also narrows the focus of the researcher on the same issue in both cases.

### c) The Limitations of Predictions

One of the important questions is the level on which this IR theory can be applied. The theory of transition is based on the existence of two classes; Fox (1974:248) uses

the *triadic approach* to analyse the relations between workers' representatives and management and Walton and McKersie between unions and management as well. One of the critical limitations for the theory of transition is the fact that IR systems are not necessarily nation based, but nations with their legal system, traditions and institutions seem to have a significant influence on the way IR operates at company level.

### c1) Variations within a National IR System

In the case of Japanese producers, there seems to be a national model with a strong tendency towards *unitarism* and collusion, i.e. the appointment of teamleaders and an authoritarian management control of teams. This *nation-based model* is predominant at Nissan, Toyota, Honda, Suzuki, Mitsubishi, Isuzu, Mazda, etc. (interview: Mithunaga 1992, appendix O). The Japanese appointment model is also transferred to Western transplants (Berggren 1991). Ford also provides indicators for the existence of a *company-based model* where teamleaders are appointed. It is extremely unlikely that elected teamspeakers can be found in European Ford operations given Ford's tradition of being anti-union (Beynon 1973) and the way teamleaders are introduced in German and British motor-car plants. At GM's CAMI plant (Robertson 1992) in Canada, teamleaders again are appointed, but CAMI's *appointment-model* changed to an *election-model*, because CAMI's workers fought for democracy (strike). On one of the rare occasions of a strike at a partly Japanese owned transplant, workers demanded elected teamleaders (Berggren 1993:182).

Except for Rover (IRS/534 1993) in the UK and GM in Spain (interview: Garcia 1994, appendix O), which operate a mixture of election and appointment, all GM plants either elect teamspeakers or appoint teamleaders. A mixed system is a selection

system that combines the election of team-members with a strong management influence.

To conclude, a distinct *national* model cannot be detected in terms of the selection of teamleaders/teamspeakers; despite the common perception about the influence of national IR systems on the outcome of the transition towards teamwork (Turner 1991). A *national model* is the exception rather than the rule. However it is possible to make some generalisations, i.e. in Germany an election model dominates, while in England an appointment model prevails. Japan alone provides a homogeneous *national* model, because all teamleaders in Japanese car manufacturers are appointed.

## c2) Variations within a Company IR System

After examining the pattern of national models it is important to investigate company models. There are companies that either only elect teamspeakers or only appoint them. Volvo universally supports elections (Berggren 1992). Often single plants within the same multi-national company operate different selection processes within a single country. GM's German plants have both systems: GM-Eisenach appoints, while GM-West elects. Within General Motors Europe (GME), there are also different systems. GME consists of plants in Germany, Britain, Spain, Belgium, etc. While German GM plants usually have elected teamspeakers, British GM plants have appointed teamleaders. GM is the most interesting research area for a study of teamleaders not because GM is the world's biggest car producer, but because of its diversity.

### c3) National and Company Systems of IR

German industrial relations have a tendency towards regulation at a national level, which is expressed in a high degree of national justification. One could call this normative or state supported *pluralism*. This focus on consensus resolution (*integrative bargaining*) creates the legitimacy and the high-trust of the German IR system. A diversity of interests is recognised and acknowledged by an institutionalised forms of industrial democracy and IR shows pluralist patterns. Typically, large corporations lean towards a democratic version of teamwork with the election of teamspeakers in all German owned motor-car manufacturers. The main exceptions, however, are foreign-owned companies that seem to have a wider choice on the issue of teamleader selection. Only foreign-owned GM-Eisenach and Ford has an appointment system.

In the USA, traditionally the industrial relations system can be seen as showing pattern of an adversarial relationship, but with an element of legal regulation of rights disputes. Typically in an industry with large corporations such as motor-car manufacturing Galbraith's (1980: 115) concept of *countervailing power* applies. The strength of organised labour in the car industry forces management to accept demands for regulation. In the US motor-car industry, however, the arrival of Japanese producers, the recession of the 1970s and 1980s, the transfer of financial capital to locations like Mexico and the exclusion of unions in Japanese-owned transplants forced unions to *concession bargaining* to achieve *mutual survival*. Throughout this period unions remained highly organised in the motor-car industry (Kochan et al. 1984, Katz 1985). As a result and in contrast to Germany's *normative pluralism* (legal regulation by the state), the frame of reference of industrial relations in American-owned motor-car manufacturers could be labelled *pragmatic pluralism* (voluntarily regulated between

monopolised capital and industrial unions). This has led to a democratic version of teamwork with the election of teamleaders.

British industrial relations show a more diverse picture. Despite the rhetoric of *pluralism* in the 1990s, there is still a strong underlying adversarial tradition in many motor-car plants. Industrial relations in Britain in the motor-car industry of the 1990s could be described as *sophisticated modern* (cf. Fox 1974:302). Purcell & Sisson (1984) explain this as support for unions and stewards *where appropriate* (cf. Purcell & Ahlstrand 1994:197). With a move towards a policy of *New Realism* (i.e. a strong move away from *adversarialism*), management's approach may gain control. As a result an examination of British motor-car manufacturers reveals a diverse picture, of democratic and non-democratic types of teamwork with elections and appointments of teamleaders.

In summary, there is only one clear cut national system of industrial relations, which has a clearly defined teamwork strategy and that is in Japan. Other nations and companies are very diverse. However, there is a clear link between a national industrial relations system and the industrial relations system of motor-car companies that are *home-owned*. In other words, a company which is *home-owned* and is located in an IR system that shows a *pluralist* frame of reference is likely to produce a democratic version of teamwork. If a company is *foreign-owned* and is located in an IR system with a *pluralist* frame of reference, it is less likely to have a democratic version of teamwork. Management in such a company has a wider choice compared with a *home-owned* company. In order to achieve a *pluralist* frame of reference, an industrial relations system needs either *normative pluralism* or *countervailing power*. If an IR



system lacks *normative pluralism* or lacks *countervailing power* the outcome for the teamwork system is unlikely to be democratic.

#### c4) A unitarist, pluralist or *adversarial* System of IR

Since Fox (1966, 1974) formulated his *triadic approach*, there have been several modifications to his system. The most recent and most sophisticated amendment of Fox's model was suggested by Purcell & Ahlstrand (1994). In other words, IR has proven to be far more complex than the simple *triadic* model originally suggested. It can never be said that actors in one approach always behave within the frame of reference in which they are supposed to behave.

In the two case studies of this thesis, IR actors did not behave consistently within one frame of reference. Neither have the two case studies been pure and uncomplicated examples which fit Fox's *frame of reference*. The reality is that one predominates on one occasion and another frame of reference predominates on another occasion. Vauxhall's IR system did not demonstrate a purely *adversarial approach* and Opel's IR system did not demonstrate a purely *pluralist approach*. In the case of Vauxhall, IR showed the dominance of an *adversarial* and *distributive bargaining* approach. However, the early participation of workers' representatives on the JPC was not a sign of an *adversarial* approach. Management's initiative for a JPC seemed to represent an attempt to establish institutionalised industrial democracy with *integrative bargaining* to mediate between both sides. As they participated on the JPC for some months, Vauxhall's stewards also showed a willingness to move from an *adversarial* and low-trust frame of reference to the high-trust *pluralist* frame of reference. Both

management and unions however failed ultimately to abandon the *adversarial* and *distributive bargaining* approach.

As at Vauxhall, Opel's works council and workplace representatives also moved between different IR approaches. While the overall pattern of behaviour of IR actors can be broadly described as pluralist, Opel's management, at times, moved towards an *adversarial* frame of reference and into *distributive bargaining* by cancelling several company agreements. Workplace representatives reacted in a similar way by moving away from a pluralist towards an *adversarial* frame of reference and organising a strike at the paint-shop. To conclude, neither in the Opel nor in the Vauxhall case are there pure example of the *triadic* categories. Unless an IR system can be clearly shown to have predominant characters of one of the three frames of reference, a prediction on future developments is limited.

#### c5) Space for Contingency

As is the case in certain IR systems, not all teamwork systems are either completely democratic or completely non-democratic. Despite the fact that most cases of the selection of teamleaders/teamspeakers showed one distinct system, some cases showed the existence of a mixed system. The prime example of this is Rover (UK) because it has a system whereby teamleaders are selected by management but workers are allowed to vote for one of the selected candidates. This system is a mixture of appointment and elections.

Limitations of the theory are not only to be found in the lack of conformity in terms of teams structures but also in the behaviour of IR actors within a certain frame of refer-

ence. They are also be found in the predicted outcomes, because not all systems show a clear outcome. While no behaviour of an IR actors can exist within a pure frame of reference, there are systems that do not lead to a pure outcome either democratic or non-democratic. This limits the use of this theoretical framework to predict outcomes, according to this theory this can only be done when an IR system shows strong patterns of one or another frame of reference. Unless a clear frame of reference can be detected, predictions about an outcome for teamwork are limited.

### c6) Probabilities

All attempts to apply the triadic categories of IR to a broader context in order to test their wider validity encounters the same problems as in the two comparative case studies. There is certainly no clear national or company model which universally applies to the introduction of new forms of work organisation such as teamwork. In fact companies show a flexibility of approach in introducing teamwork (cf. GME) which is dependent on their awareness of the existence of different IR models; some elements of which suit them but which on the whole they do little to change. While there is then no absolutely pure or static IR system which is *unitarist*, *pluralist* or *adversarial*, either in terms of nation, company or, indeed, within one plant, there is still a high degree of probability that where an IR system is weighted towards one approach then the introduction of any new form of representation in IR will be heavily influenced by the traditional system. New representational forms will tend to exist alongside the old ones either in an *adversarial* relationship (Vauxhall) or in a more comfortable pluralist manner (Opel) but they do not radically alter the old system. In the exceptional case, where it could be argued that the introduction of teamwork changed an IR system (CAMI), it was solely because one of the *adversarial* actors (workers) gained the up-

per hand over the other *adversarial* actor (management) through an act of *adversarialism* (strike) and moved the IR system into a more participative or pluralist model; a change, it is interesting to note that was short-lived. It seems, then, that despite a certain degree of fluidity within IR systems the probability of predicting outcomes from a knowledge of an existing IR system is extremely high not only in specific industries like the motor-car industry but also in many other industrial situations.

# Appendix

## (A) Interview Questions for Company visits (Vauxhall Luton)

### Question for Luton

#### 1. The Company

- 1.1. Starting year and history of the plant?
- 1.2. Position inside GM-Europe?
- 1.3. Position inside GM world wide?
- 1.4. Number of shops inside the plant?
- 1.5. Tasks or name of the shops?
- 1.6. Operating task or which car and output?
- 1.7. Mode of operation (cell, dock, line etc.)?
- 1.8. Which work time and shift working pattern can be found at the plant?

#### 2. The social structure of the plant?

- 2.1. How many workers?
  - 2.2. White collar and blue collar proportion?
  - 2.3. Production worker and skilled worker?
  - 2.4. How many workers are inside each shop?
- #### 3. Trade Union Representation?
- 3.1. Which unions are in the plant?
  - 3.2. Which areas are covered by which unions?
  - 3.3. How many shop stewards has each union?
  - 3.4. How do they get elected?
  - 3.5. How often do they meet?
  - 3.6. How many *Betriebsräte* and *Vertrauensleute* are there?
  - 3.7. How do they get elected?
  - 3.8. How often do they meet?
  - 3.9. Is there a committee of joint shop stewards?
  - 3.10. How often does it meet?
  - 3.11. How is the outside contact to the various unions officials?
  - 3.12. Is there any union connection to other GM-plants in GB?
  - 3.13. Is there any contact to GM-plants within Europe and in the USA?
  - 3.14. Is there any contact to other Car plants?

#### 4. Team Concept

- 4.1. Is teamwork introduced?
- 4.2. In which areas of the plant teamwork is introduced?
- 4.3. How long does teamwork exist?
- 4.4. How teamwork was introduced?
- 4.5. What was the reaction of the workers, the foreman/Meisters and managers towards teamwork?
- 4.6. Are there agreements between trade unions and the company concerning the issue of teamwork?
- 4.7. On which level (plant, regional, national) are this agreements?
- 4.8. How many members has each team in which area of production and who decided that?
- 4.9. Are the teams composed of unskilled and skilled workers?
- 4.10. Is there job rotation within groups?
- 4.11. Is there job rotation among other groups?
- 4.12. How defines rotation and how is it organised?
- 4.13. What are the regulative powers of the team?
- 4.14. Who defines the boarders of the team's regulative powers?
- 4.15. In which areas (production, holiday, overtime, shift pattern, absenteeism, work time etc.) can teams regulate there own affairs?

#### 5. Teams and Representation

- 5.1. How do teams represent themselves?
- 5.2. Do teams have mixed union membership?
- 5.3. If yes, did this cause problems?

- 5.4. If yes, which problems did arise and how were there solved?
- 5.5. Are there team leaders, or team speakers?
- 5.6. What is the role or task of the team speakers?
- 5.7. Who defines the team speakers role or task?
- 5.8. Are the team speakers elected or appointed?
- 5.9. Who is appointing this team speakers?
- 5.10. If the team speakers are elected, how did they get elected and who regulates the election process?
- 5.11. If the team speakers are elected, how often take election place and who defines the elected period of the team speakers?
- 5.12. Who got elected for team speakers?
- 5.13. In how many cases did shop stewards/Vertrauensleute got elected for the position of team speakers?
- 5.14. How is the relationship between "non-shop steward team speakers/non-Vertrauensleute team speakers" and "shop steward team speakers/Vertrauenslaute team speakers"?
- 5.15. Did the team speakers deal with issues which concerns shop stewards/Vertrauensleute (or Betriebsräte) representation?
- 5.16. Did the existents of "non-shop steward team speakers/non-Vertrauensleute team speakers" cause problems for the trade unions/Betriebsräte?
- 5.17. How do the trade unions/Betriebsräte deal with that?
- 5.18. Will "non-shop steward team speakers/non-Vertrauensleute team speakers" undermine trade union representation?

Thomas Murakami M.A., Univ.of Warwick/SIBS-Phd), December 1992

**Fragen für Opel**

1. Das Unternehmen:
  - 1.1. Beginn und Geschichte des Unternehmens?
  - 1.2. Position des Unternehmens innerhalb General Motors Europa (Produktionszusammenhänge)?
  - 1.3. Position des Unternehmens innerhalb GM-weltweit (Produktionszusammenhänge)?
  - 1.4. Anzahl der Produktionsabteilungen im Werk?
  - 1.5. Produktionsaufgabe und Bezeichnung der jeweiligen Abteilung?
  - 1.6. Produziertes Autos und Produktionszahlen?
  - 1.7. Produktionsverfahren (Zell - Fertigungen, Fließband usw.)?
  - 1.8. Arbeitszeit und Schichtabläufe im Werk?
2. Sozialstruktur des Werkes
  - 2.1. Wieviele Arbeiter/Angestellte sind beschäftigt?
  - 2.2. Verhältnis zwischen Arbeitern und Angestellten?
  - 2.3. Verhältnis zwischen ungelernten Arbeitern und Facharbeitern?
  - 2.4. Wieviele Beschäftigte arbeiten in jeder Produktionsabteilung?
3. Vertretungsstrukturen
  - 3.1. Organisationsgrad im Werk?
  - 3.2. Gibt es unterschiedliche Organisationsstärken innerhalb des Werkes?
  - 3.3. bis 3.5. = Great Britain
  - 3.6. Wieviele Betriebsräte und wieviele Vertrauensleute gibt es?
  - 3.7. Wie werden diese gewählt?
  - 3.8. Wie oft finden Versammlungen der Betriebsräte/Vertrauensleute statt?
  - 3.9. und 3.10. = Great Britain
  - 3.11. Wie ist die Zusammenarbeit mit den zuständigen Gewerkschaftsvertretern?
  - 3.12. Gibt es Verbindungen zu Betriebsräte/Vertrauensleute in anderen General Motors Werken innerhalb der BRD?
  - 3.13. Gibt es Verbindungen zu Betriebsräte/Vertrauensleute in General Motors Werken in Europa oder den USA?
  - 3.14. Gibt es Verbindungen zu Betriebsräte/Vertrauensleute anderer Automobilunternehmen?
4. Gruppenarbeit
  - 4.1. Ist Gruppenarbeit eingeführt?
  - 4.2. In welchen Bereichen des Unternehmens wurde Gruppenarbeit eingeführt?
  - 4.3. Wie lange existiert Gruppenarbeit schon?
  - 4.4. Wie wurde Gruppenarbeit eingeführt?
  - 4.5. Wie war die Reaktion der Arbeiter, der Meister und der Geschäftsleitung gegenüber Gruppenarbeit?
  - 4.6. Gibt es eine Betriebsvereinbarung über Gruppenarbeit zwischen dem Betriebsrat und dem Unternehmen?
  - 4.7. Auf welcher Ebene wurde der Vertrag abgeschlossen (Unternehmen, Werk, usw.)?
  - 4.8. Wieviele Mitglieder hat eine Gruppe in welchem Produktionsbereich und wer entscheidet darüber?
  - 4.9. Gibt es Gruppen bestehend aus ungelernten Arbeitern und Facharbeitern?
  - 4.10. Gibt es Rotation innerhalb der Gruppen?
  - 4.11. Gibt es gruppenübergreifende Rotation ?
  - 4.12. Wer legt diese Rotation fest?
  - 4.13. Welche regulativen Möglichkeiten hat eine Gruppe?
  - 4.14. Wer legt die Grenzen der Möglichkeiten einer Gruppen fest?
  - 4.15. In welchen Bereichen (Produktion, Urlaub, Überstunden, Schichtarbeit, Abwesenheit, Arbeitszeit usw.) kann die Gruppe ihre eigenen Angelegenheiten selbst regeln?

- 5. Gruppenarbeit und Vertretungsstrukturen**
- 5.1. Wie vertreten sich die Gruppen nach außen?
  - 5.2. bis 5.4. = Great Britain
  - 5.5. Gibt es Team Leader oder Gruppensprecher?
  - 5.6. Was sind Rolle und Aufgaben der Gruppensprecher?
  - 5.7. Wer legt diese Rollen und Aufgaben fest?
  - 5.8. Werden die Gruppensprecher ernannt oder gewählt?
  - 5.9. nur in Great Britain
  - 5.10. Wie werden die Gruppensprecher gewählt und wer legt diesen Wahlmodus fest?
  - 5.11. Wie oft werden die Gruppensprecher gewählt und wer legt die Amtszeit eines Gruppensprechers fest?
  - 5.12. Wer wurde als Gruppensprecher gewählt?
  - 5.13. In wieviel Fällen wurden Vertrauensleute/Betriebsräte zu Gruppensprechern gewählt?
  - 5.14. Wie ist das Verhältnis zwischen Ex-Vertrauensleuten-Gruppensprechern und Gruppensprechern, die vorher keine Vertrauensleute waren?
  - 5.15. Übernehmen Gruppensprecher Aufgaben von Vertrauensleuten/Betriebsräten (Kompetenzüberschneidungen)?
  - 5.16. Bereiten die "nicht-Vertrauensleute-Gruppensprecher" Probleme für die Vertrauensleute/Betriebsräte?
  - 5.17. Wie gehen die Vertrauensleute/Betriebsräte damit um?
  - 5.18. Können die "nicht-Vertrauensleute-Gruppensprecher" die Vertretungsstrukturen unterlaufen und/oder aushöhlen?



## To Team Members

Dear Team Member,

With the following questionnaire, I would like you to answer these questions concerning the concept of teamwork. This questionnaire is completely anonymous and therefore none of the questions relate to you personally. We are going to ask questions about team concepts, team-meetings, team leaders and so on. We are interested in questions of fact and more importantly, we want your opinions on a range of issues.

Your answers will not be forwarded to Vauxhall Motors Ltd. Your participation in this questionnaire is completely voluntary. So, please answer the questions to the best of your ability.

1. Including the team leader how many people are in your team?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. How many are women? (including the team leader)

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Is your team leader a woman or a man?

☐ Male ☐ Woman ☐ No Response

4. Has the number of people on your team changed since your last meeting?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ No Response

5. Details?

\_\_\_\_\_

6. What do you like about the team concept at Vauxhall Motors Ltd.?

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Is there anything you don't like about the team concept at Vauxhall Motors Ltd.?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8. Are you required to attend team-meetings?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ No Response

9. Do you always attend?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ No Response

10. Is there a pressing issue that your team is dealing with now?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ No Response

11. How much do you like the idea of working as part of a team?

very much/somewhat/not much/not at all

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

12. How much do you like being a member of your team?

very much/somewhat/not much/not at all

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

13. How often have there been serious disagreements between members of your team?

all the time/ often/ once in a while/ never

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

14. If the answer to 13 is other than "never", probe what the disagreements were about, how many members involved, if team leader involved, how the issue was resolved, etc.?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

15. Please read the following list of statements and mark wherever you agree or disagree. All things considered, working in a team...

a) Helps me do my job better.

agree

☐

disagree

☐

b) Gives me a chance to get to know people.

☐☐

- c) Is a waste of time.
- d) Gives me a chance to raise my concerns.
- e) Helps me feel I'm part of Vauxhall.
- f) Is a way to get us to work harder.
- g) Helps me see how my job fits in the overall scheme.
- h) Gets us all pressuring one another.
- i) Gives me a say over how my job is done.
- j) Helps Vauxhall but not me.
- k) Allows team members to act together to express complaints.

☐  
☐  
☐  
☐  
☐  
☐  
☐  
☐  
☐
☐  
☐  
☐  
☐  
☐  
☐  
☐  
☐  
☐

16. The next section focuses on the team leader: For the following series of questions you are asked to make a judgement about how often something happens. There are four choices.

all the time / often / once in a while / never

- a) How often do you get along with your team leader?
- b) How often does your team leader help you with your job?
- c) How often does your team leader co-operate with you?
- d) How often do you get the sense your team leader respects you?
- e) How often does your team leader pressures you to submit suggestions?
- f) How often does your team leader listen to your ideas about making the job easier and safer?
- g) How often does your team leader put pressure on you to do your job?
- h) How often does your team leader think more like management than one of you?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

17. Do you think there should be team leader?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ No Response

18. Would you like to become team leader?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ No Response

19. Do you think team leaders should be elected?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ No Response

20. Do you think that team leaders should be rotated? Do you think that everyone should get a chance at being the team leader ?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ No Response

21. Do you think that the current system for selecting team leaders is a fair one?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ No Response

22. In no, what system would be a fair one? (Probe seniority)

---



---

23. If you thought that you or someone on your team was being subjected to some form of on-the-job harassment or unfair treatment, who would you most likely turn to in order to get something done?

- ☐ 1. your team leader
- ☐ 2. your union representative
- ☐ 3. the personnel department
- ☐ 5. others \_\_\_\_\_

24. Some people say that when the team concept has been tried at other plants the teams work more for the good of the company than for the good of the workers. Based on your experience at Vauxhall would you:

- ☐ 1. agree
- ☐ 2. agree somewhat
- ☐ 3. disagree somewhat
- ☐ 4. disagree
- ☐ 5. no response

25. What do you think about your team leader's position on the union?

too critical / too supportive / about right  
☐ ☐ ☐

26. What proportion of members of your team would agree with your assessment?

almost all/most/about half/some/none/don't know  
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

27. Is the union a source of arguments or disagreements between the team and team leader?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ No Response

28. If yes, when there are disagreements with your team leader over the union, how often does your team stick together and challenge the team leader?

all the times / often / sometimes / never  
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

29. If no, in your opinion if there was a serious disagreement with your team leader over the union, how likely would it be for the team to stick together and challenge the team leader?

very likely/ likely/ unlikely/ highly unlikely  
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

30. Is the union a source of arguments or disagreements between team members?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ No Response

The final question:

31. When there is a disagreement with Vauxhall policy on the union, does the team leader side with the team (or team member) or with the supervisor?

- ☐ 1. sides with the team (or team member)
- ☐ 2. sides with the supervisor
- ☐ 3. the problem hasn't come up but the team leader would side with the team.
- ☐ 4. the problem hasn't come up but the team leader would side with the supervisor.
- ☐ 5. no response

*Thank you for your time and effort*

Thomas Murakami  
University of Warwick, SIBS-PHD, Coventry CV4 7AL

**(D)** Survey Questionnaire for the Adam Opel Rüsselsheim plant

**An Gruppenmitglieder**

Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren,  
ich möchte Sie bitten, die folgenden Fragen kurz zu beantworten. Wie Sie sehen ist der Fragebogen anonym gehalten. Es gibt keine Fragen zu Ihrer Person. Eine Weitergabe an die Adam Opel AG findet nicht statt. Es werden Ihnen durch die Beantwortung des Fragebogens - die auf Freiwilligkeit basiert - keine Vor- oder Nachteile entstehen. Sie können also ohne Bedenken jede Frage so beantworten, wie Sie es für zutreffend erachten.

Datum: \_\_\_\_\_ Arbeitsbereich: \_\_\_\_\_

Name des zuständigen Betriebsrats: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Wieviel Mitglieder hat Ihre Gruppe einschließlich des Gruppensprechers? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Wieviel Mitglieder der Gruppe sind Frauen? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Geschlecht des Gruppensprechers? Mann ☐ Frau ☐

4. Hat sich die Anzahl Ihrer Gruppenmitglieder Ja ☐ Nein ☐  
seit dem letzten Gruppengespräch geändert? keine Angabe ☐

5. Warum hat sich die Zahl verändert? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Was gefällt Ihnen an Gruppenarbeit? .. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. Was gefällt Ihnen an Gruppenarbeit nicht ? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. Wird von Ihnen verlangt an Ja ☐ Nein ☐  
Gruppengesprächen teilzunehmen? ...keine Angabe ☐

9. Haben Sie bisher an allen ... Ja ☐ Nein ☐  
Gruppengesprächen teilgenommen? ...keine Angabe ☐

10. Gibt es derzeit ein wichtiges .. Ja ☐ Nein ☐  
Thema in der Gruppe? .....keine Angabe ☐

11. Sagt Ihnen die Idee etwas als Teil einer Gruppe zu arbeiten?  
ja, sehr ☐ eigentlich schon ☐ nicht so sehr ☐ absolut nicht ☐

12. Gefällt es Ihnen als Teil einer Gruppe zu arbeiten?  
ja, sehr ☐ eigentlich schon ☐ nicht so sehr ☐ absolut nicht ☐

13. Wie oft gab es ernste Meinungsverschiedenheiten innerhalb der Gruppe?  
immer ☐ oft ☐ manchmal ☐ nie ☐

14. Wenn eine andere Antwort als "NIE" gewählt wurde, was waren die Gründe  
und half der Gruppensprecher die Probleme zu lösen? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

15. Arbeiten in der Gruppe?

Wie beurteilen Sie die folgenden Aussagen: ...Zutreffend .      Unzutreffend

- a) Hilft mir meine Arbeit besser zu verrichten...☐..☐
- b) Ich habe die Chance andere Leute kennenzulernen..☐..☐
- c) Ist eine Verschwendung von Zeit.....☐..☐
- d) Ich kann meine Gedanken äußern.....☐..☐
- e) Hilft mir mich als Mercedes-Mitarbeiter zu fühlen..☐..☐
- f) Macht die Arbeit schwerer.....☐..☐
- g) Dadurch verstehe ich wie meine Arbeit in der gesamten Arbeitsprozeß einzuordnen ist...☐..☐
- h) Erzeugt Arbeitsdruck in der Gruppe....☐..☐
- i) Ich kann über die Art meiner Tätigkeit mitbestimmen..☐..☐
- j) Hilft der Mercedes-Benz AG, aber nicht mir...☐..☐
- k) Ermöglicht den Gruppenmitgliedern das gemeinsame Vorbringen von Problemen.....☐..☐

#### 16. Gruppensprecher:

(bitte nur ein Feld ankreuzen)....immeroftmanchmalnie

- a) Wie oft sprechen Sie mit Ihrem Gruppensprecher.☐☐☐☐
- b) Wie oft hilft er der Gruppe bei der Arbeit.☐☐☐☐
- c) Wie oft arbeitet er mit der Gruppe gemeinsam.☐☐☐☐
- d) Wie oft denke Sie, Ihr Gr-Sprecher respektiert Sie☐☐☐☐
- e) Wie oft verlangt er KVP-Vorschläge von Ihnen.☐☐☐☐
- f) Wie oft hört Ihr Gruppensprecher zu, wenn Sie Vorschläge zur Arbeitserleichterung machen.☐☐☐☐
- g) Wie oft fordert Ihr Gr-Sprecher mehr Arbeit von Ihnen☐☐☐☐
- h) wie oft denkt Ihr Gruppensprecher mehr wie die Geschäftsleitung als wie die Arbeiter..☐☐☐☐

17. Glauben Sie, es sollte Gruppensprecher geben? Ja☐Nein☐  
keine Angabe☐

18. Möchte Sie Gruppensprecher werden? Ja☐Nein☐  
keine Angabe☐

19. Glauben Sie, Gruppensprecher sollten..Ja☐Nein☐  
gewählt werden keine Angabe☐

20. Sollte die Tätigkeit des Gruppensprechers. Ja☐Nein☐  
rotieren keine Angabe☐

21. Denken Sie, daß die gegenwärtige Regelung der Ja☐Nein☐  
Wahl der Gruppensprecher fair ist? keine Angabe☐

22. Wenn nicht, welche Regelung wäre dann besser?

---

- 23. Wenn ein Gruppenmitglied unfair 1. Meinen Gruppensprecher.☐  
behandelt würde, an wen würden Sie2. Meinen Vertrauensmann.☐  
sich wenden um dies abzustellen? 3. Meinen Betriebsrat..☐
- 4. Meinen Meister..☐
- 5. Personalabteilung..☐
- 6. andere\_\_\_\_\_

24. Es wurde in anderen Firmen gesagt, 1. stimmt..☐

daß Gruppenarbeit mehr dem 2. ja, vielleicht..☐  
Unternehmen dient als den Arbeitern?3. eher nicht..☐  
4. stimmt nicht..☐  
5. keine Angaben..☐

25. Welche Position vertritt Ihrer Meinung1. zu kritisch..☐  
nach Ihr Gruppensprecher gegenüber2. zu unterstützend..☐  
dem Betriebsrat/Vertrauensmann?3. gerade richtig..☐  
4. keine Angaben..☐

26. Wieviel Ihrer Gruppenmitglieder würden1. etwa alle..☐  
Ihrer Ansicht zustimmen 2. etwa die Hälfte. ☐  
3. niemand..☐  
4. keine Angaben..☐

27. Ist der Betriebsrat/Vertrauensmann ein 1. ja...☐  
Grund von Unstimmigkeiten zwischen der 2. nein...☐  
Gruppe und dem Gruppensprecher?3. keine Angaben..☐

28. Wenn J A , wie oft steht Ihre 1. immer...☐  
Gruppe zusammen gegen den 2. oft...☐  
Gruppensprecher? 3. manchmal...☐  
4. nie...☐

29. Wenn N E I N , wäre es 1. sehr wahrscheinlich..☐  
wahrscheinlich, das die Gruppe ihre 2. wahrscheinlich..☐  
Meinung gegen den Gruppensprecher 3. unwahrscheinlich..☐  
vertritt? 4. sehr unwahrscheinlich..☐

30. Ist der Betriebsrat/Vertrauensleute 1. ja...☐  
ein Grund von Konflikten zwischen 2. nein...☐  
den Gruppenmitgliedern? 3. keine Angaben..☐

Zur letzten Frage:

31. Wenn es zwischen der Mercedes-Benz auf der einen Seite und dem  
Betriebsrat/der Gewerkschaft auf der anderen Seite zu Konflikten kommt,  
wem schließt sich dann Ihr Gruppensprecher am ehesten an?

1. der Gruppe und den anderen Gruppenmitgliedern....☐  
2. dem Meister.....☐  
3. Bis jetzt trat dieses Problem noch nicht auf,  
aber der Gruppensprecher würde sich  
wahrscheinlich der Gruppe anschließen.....☐  
4. Bis jetzt trat dieses Problem noch nicht auf,  
aber der Gruppensprecher würde sich  
wahrscheinlich dem Meister anschließen.....☐

Danke für Ihre Mitarbeit

Thomas Murakami, University of Warwick, IRRU, GB-Coventry CV4 7AL

## Working together to win

Vauxhall's team work agreement is defined in a small book issued by Vauxhall's Luton general head office. The document, which is signed by all unions and the management regulated the team concept in the following statements:

**a. Concept:**

The Trade Unions, as the representatives of employees, have an integral part to play in this agreement. The team concept is a critical part of the *Quality Network Production System* that will allow the Company to be a producer of World Class Quality products at a competitive cost thereby securing customer satisfaction and contributing to the long term viability of the Company and long term job security for its employees. The key ingredient in the concept is that employees have an opportunity to impact the success of the business through decision making, pride in their work and co-operative efforts among each other to continue to improve the value provided to our customers. This process requires joint participations mutual trust, respect and recognises employees as the most important investment and resource and a critical part of the operational process. The functional catalyst of the team concept, therefore, are the team members and team leaders who share responsibilities.

All team members (5-15) share the responsibility for:

- Work performed by the team, subject to any work measurement system in operation at the time
- Rotating jobs within the team and, where necessary, between teams within job classification
- Ensuring quality of team output
- Maintaining a safe clean and tidy work area

Continually striving for improvement in operations, cost, quality and productivity, e.g. scrap and waste reduction, keeping quality and maintenance records, etc.

- Establishing and achieving team goals as set out in the objectives.
- Acquiring job knowledge to fulfil all jobs within the team with adequate training. Being a self-sufficient team by performing duties previously performed by other disciplines, e.g. self-inspection, repair, minor maintenance subject to time allowance.
- Developing efficient work methods in conjunction with support activities and displaying those methods in the workplace.
- Attending and participating in team-meetings as required within working hours.
- Team-meetings outside of shift hours will be determined and agreed within the Team. Attendance at such meetings will be on a voluntary basis and without any form of prejudice towards any non-participating team member.

The team involves employees working together as a natural work group. An assembly line team could be composed solely of employees working together with full flexibility to achieve schedules and improve efficiency and quality. Similarly assembly teams also work together as part of a larger team unit to achieve maximum positive affect from all groups of the operation. e.g.:

- Assembly team
- Material handling team
- Maintenance team
- Quality Assurance

Linking team together (team support or work together):

Even recognising full individual flexibility teams can also be composed of employees from one or more occupational classifications as required to accomplish a task. These teams, for the purpose of problem-solving, will be constructed on a temporary basis, from the various classifications in order to overcome these problems, e.g. recurring equipment breakdowns, e.g.

A = Manufacturing Staff - Assembly Team

B = Manufacturing Staff-MPC.

C = Manufacturing Support - Maintenance/Technical Support Staff

D = Manufacturing Staff - Quality Assurance

with each employee carrying out any task up to their skill level and within safety statutes.

**b) Team Leaders:**

This responsible position provides further growth opportunities for team employees to assist them in developing their full potential. The Team leader is an integral part of the team and has a full and active role within that Team. In addition to the responsibilities of a team member the team leader will also have responsibilities for:

- Knowledge and ability to perform all operations in the team.
- Dedication and ability to support the team with overall guidance from the Supervisor.
- Active liaison with other team leaders, Supervisors and such other employees, e.g. Shop Steward as the position requires.

Encouraging individuals and the team to meet their responsibilities in:

Quality, Cost, Productivity, Scrap reduction, Training, Job rotation, Performance to schedule, Safety.

All aspects of how teams and team leader concepts work are of interest to the Trade Unions and all representational procedures will apply where appropriate:

- Problem-solving in the areas of employee job related problems.
- Obtaining and co-originating necessary supplies, required maintenance and technical support to ensure continuous efficient operations.
- Accepting responsibility for the working operation of the team.
- Accommodating employee absences where appropriate.
- Communicating job related information to team members.
- The Unions accept that the Company will establish through agreement a selection criteria for team leaders. The selection of team leaders will be on the basis of this agreed criteria. Applications will be sought and all applicants will be interviewed.

Note:

Employees who are group leaders at the time of signing this Agreement, and are not selected as team leaders will retain their rate of pay until, and subject to, further discussion on Salary/pay rates and progression.

*c) Supervisors:*

The manufacturing supervisor will be responsible for providing the leadership of a small number of teams. The supervisor will maintain responsibility for such matters as developmental/ disciplinary/corrective action, engineering changes, revamps and administration of salary/wage changes, etc.

The supervisor will have responsibility for selecting new team members, establishing performance standards in conjunction with other supervisors/managers within the units and for reviewing employee's performance for the purpose of personal development and, where necessary, wage progression.



# The Team Concept with the Factory

Please tick the following fields where appropriate ot define the role of your team within the factory organisation:

Priority should be given to teams in final assembly.

TASK

## Participation:

	No Participation by the team	Team Participation in Decision	Co-Decision Making	Autonomous Team Decisions
1) Selection of Teamleaders	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2) New Members in the Team	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3) Distribution of Work within the Team	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4) Time Flexibility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5) Acceptance of additional work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6) Representation outside of the Team	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7) Methods of Production	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8) Goal of Production (Output)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9) Goals of Production (Quality)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Thank you very much for taking time to answer the question above.

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# Fragen zur Gruppenarbeit

Mit diesem kleinen Fragebogen möchte ich Sie herzlich bitten, die nachstehenden Fragen gemäß der gegenwärtigen Praxis der Gruppenarbeit in Ihrem Werk zu beantworten ☑. Im Mittelpunkt meines Interesses steht dabei die **Produktions-Gruppe** in der Vor- oder Endmontage. Sollten Gruppen (möglicherweise Projektgruppen) mit unterschiedlichen Ausformungen existieren, so sollte die Gruppe ausgewählt werden, die am längsten existiert und die größte Erfahrung sammeln konnte.

Ihr Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Firma: \_\_\_\_\_ Datum: \_\_\_\_\_

Aufgabenbereich:	Die Gruppe hat:			
	kein Einfluß	MitSprache	Mitentscheidung	Gruppenentscheidung
Fragen der Gruppenleitung.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fragen von Neueinstellungen.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fragen der Aufgabenverteilung.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fragen der Produktionsmethoden..	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fragen der Arbeitszeitgestaltung...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Annahme von zusätzlichen Arbeiten/Überschuß	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fragen der Vertretung nach außen...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quantitative Produktionsziele....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Qualitative Produktionsziele.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Haben Sie allerbesten Dank für Ihre Zeit und Bemühungen und besonders dafür, daß Sie mir beim meiner Forschung behilflich waren.

Bitte schicken Sie  
den ausgefüllten  
Fragebogen an  
mich zurück:

**Thomas Murakami**

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# **Betriebsvereinbarung Nr. 179**

## **Gruppenarbeit**

Zwischen der Geschäftsleitung und dem von den Betriebsräten der Werke Rüsselsheim, Bochum, Kaiserslautern und des Prüffeldes Dudenhofen bevollmächtigten Gesamtbetriebsrat der Adam Opel AG wird folgende Betriebsvereinbarung zur Anwendung der Gruppenarbeit geschlossen.

### **Präambel**

In der Adam Opel AG wird Gruppenarbeit eingeführt, um die Wettbewerbsfähigkeit des Unternehmens zu erhalten und zu steigern sowie den Mitarbeitern/innen verbesserte individuelle Entwicklungsmöglichkeiten im Rahmen ihrer betrieblichen Tätigkeiten anzubieten.

Die Kenntnisse und Erfahrungen der Arbeitnehmer/innen sollen zur Verbesserung der Arbeitsabläufe, der Arbeitsplätze, der Arbeitsumgebung sowie der Arbeitsbedingungen genutzt werden, indem die Arbeitnehmer/innen an der betrieblichen Gestaltung von Arbeitsabläufen beteiligt werden.

Personelle Veränderungen durch Produktivitätsverbesserung sollen unter anderem zur Verbesserung der Produktqualität und zur Mitarbeiterqualifizierung genutzt werden.

Wesentliche Ziele der Gruppenarbeit sind der kontinuierliche Verbesserungsprozeß (KVP), Steigerung von Flexibilität und Einsatzbereitschaft der Mitarbeiter/innen sowie Erhöhung der Arbeitszufriedenheit und der Motivation.

Wird durch Produktivitätssteigerung die Gruppengröße reduziert, werden freiwerdende Mitarbeiter/innen an Arbeitsplätzen eingesetzt, die nach Möglichkeit höherwertiger sind bzw. Entwicklungspotential bieten, mindestens jedoch der gegenwärtigen Wertigkeit entsprechen. Durch Maßnahmen aus dieser BV darf kein Gruppenmitglied weniger Lohn oder Gehalt erhalten oder entlassen werden.

### **1. Geltungsbereich**

Diese Betriebsvereinbarung gilt für alle Beschäftigten der Werke Rüsselsheim, Bochum, Kaiserslautern und des Prüffeldes Dudenhofen.

### **2. Grundprinzipien der Gruppenarbeit**

#### **Gruppengröße:**

Gruppen bestehen in der Regel aus 8 bis 15 Mitarbeitern/innen.

#### **Gruppenbereich:**

Jede Gruppe arbeitet in einem sinnvoll abgrenzbaren Tätigkeitsbereich.

#### **Gruppenzusammensetzung:**

Die Gruppen sollen in ihrer angetroffenen Zusammensetzung gebildet werden. Um die Kontinuität der Gruppe zu gewährleisten, sind die Gruppen personell so zu besetzen, daß Kurzverleihungen aufgrund unterschiedlicher Anwesenheiten und Programmschwankungen möglichst vermieden werden.

#### **Aufgaben/Ziele der Gruppe:**

Die Gruppe hat gemeinsame Aufgaben und Ziele, die in Absprache mit dem betrieblichen Vorgesetzten festgelegt werden. Es sind dies u.a.:

- Selbstorganisation bei
  - der internen Aufgabenverteilung
  - der Pausenregelung
  - der Schichtübergabe
  - der Durchführung von Gruppengesprächen
  - der Verbesserung des Arbeitsschutzes
  - der Überwindung hoher Arbeitsteilung
  - der Durchführung der Urlaubsplanung
  - der Freiplanung von Maschinen im Rahmen eines vorgegebenen Programmes
- Erhöhung der Arbeitszufriedenheit und Motivation
- Erfüllung des Produktionsprogrammes und der Qualitätsanforderungen

- Ausgleich von Leistungsschwankungen
- Kostengünstige Produktion
  - Optimale Maschinen- und Anlagennutzung einschließlich der übertragenen Instandhaltungs- und Wartungsarbeiten (kleinere Reparaturen) und kleineren Einrichtttätigkeiten
- Kontinuierlicher Verbesserungsprozeß (KVP) zur Vereinfachung und Erleichterung der Arbeit und Optimierung der Fertigung. Daraus resultierende Veränderungen finden Eingang in die Arbeitsvorschrift
  - Anschauliche Darstellung von Arbeitsplatz und Arbeitsablauf nach einem einheitlichen Verfahren
- Durchführung von Verbesserungen im Arbeitsbereich der Gruppe
- Sicherstellung des Informationsflusses (untereinander, zu vor- bzw. nachgeschalteten Bereichen und zum Meister/in)
- Einarbeitung neuer Mitarbeiter/innen durch gegenseitiges Training und entsprechendem Zeitausgleich
  - Integration von Behinderten, Gleichgestellten und nicht voll einsatzfähigen Werksangehörigen
- Ordnung und Sauberkeit am Arbeitsplatz
- Förderung des kreativen, innovativen und selbständigen Denkens und Handelns bei den Mitarbeiter/innen
- Mitgestaltung der Arbeitsinhalte, Arbeitsbedingungen, Arbeitsorganisation und Arbeitsumgebung

Personelle Maßnahmen, die aufgrund der Ergebnisse von Gruppenarbeit/Gesprächen realisiert werden sollen, setzen die Zustimmung des Betriebsrates nach BetrVG voraus.

Personenbezogene Tests, Prüfungen, Leistungskontrolle und Beurteilungen durch die Gruppe finden nicht statt.

#### **Gruppengespräche:**

Gruppengespräche sind Arbeitsbesprechungen von bis zu einer Stunde und sollen einmal wöchentlich stattfinden.

Die Gruppe bestimmt den Zeitpunkt des Gruppengesprächs unter Berücksichtigung der Fertigungssituation und in Abstimmung mit dem Vorgesetzten. Dies gilt besonders für schicht- und bereichsübergreifende Gespräche.

Das Gespräch findet möglichst in der normalen Arbeitszeit statt. Müssen die Gruppengespräche fertigungs- oder programmbedingt außerhalb der Schichtzeit stattfinden, werden sie als Mehrarbeit vergütet.

Die Gruppe ist frei sowohl in der Wahl der Themen im Hinblick auf die oben definierten Aufgaben als auch in der Frage, wen sie zu den Gruppengesprächen einlädt. Fach- und Führungskräfte sowie der Betriebsrat werden zur Klärung spezifischer Fragen hinzugezogen.

Vorgesetzte, Betriebsrat sowie Fachabteilungen können in Absprache mit der Gruppe spezielle Themen in die Gruppengespräche einbringen und bei deren Behandlung teilnehmen.

#### **Zielerreichung**

Die Weiterentwicklung der Gruppe im Hinblick auf ihre Zielerreichung wird durch Eigenkontrolle anhand vorgegebener Parameter durchgeführt und anschaulich dargestellt.

Parameter können z.B. sein:

- Abbau der Monotonie
- Anlagen- und produktbezogene Qualifizierung
- Arbeitsbedingungen
- Arbeitssicherheit
- Ausbringung
- Belastungsausgleich innerhalb der Gruppe
- Kosten; z.B. Nacharbeit, Ausschuß Hilfsstoffe usw.
- Maschinenverfügbarkeit
- Menschengerechte Arbeitsplätze (Arbeitsplatzgestaltung)
- Qualität

#### **Entlohnung:**

Die Entlohnung für Gruppenarbeit erfolgt im Opel-Prämienlohn auf der Basis der BV-Nr. 180 und richtet sich innerhalb der Gruppen nach den Anforderungen der jeweiligen Arbeitsplätze.

#### **Personalzubilligung bei Gruppenarbeit:**

Die Arbeitszutelllung erfolgt auf Gruppenbasis.

Die Übergangszeit bis zur Einführung des neuen Systems und Details zur Personalzubilligung bei Gruppenarbeit sind zu regeln.

### **Flexibilität innerhalb der Gruppe:**

Die Gruppe sorgt für die Erreichung und Aufrechterhaltung der festgelegten Flexibilität zur Erfüllung der Arbeitsaufgabe. Im Rahmen der vorgegebenen Flexibilität soll deshalb zwischen den Arbeitsplätzen gewechselt werden.

Jedem Gruppenmitglied muß die Möglichkeit der individuellen Entwicklung im Rahmen der betrieblichen Tätigkeit und Notwendigkeit gegeben werden. Die Gruppe darf niemanden in dieser Entwicklung hindern.

Neben der internen Flexibilität muß in den Gruppen eine übergreifende Flexibilität aufgebaut werden, so daß Gruppenmitglieder auch in den örtlich vor- bzw. nachgeschalteten Nachbargruppen arbeiten können. Dadurch sollen Verleihungen vermieden werden. Der/die zuständige Meister/in regt dies an und stimmt dies zwischen den Gruppen ab.

### **3. Gruppensprecher/in**

Der/die Gruppensprecher/in vertritt die Gruppe nach innen und außen. Er/sie handelt im Auftrag der Gruppe und hat keine Weisungs- und Disziplinarbefugnis.

Der/die Gruppensprecher/in wird in freier geheimer Wahl mit einfacher Mehrheit zunächst auf 6 Monate und später bei Wiederwahl auf ein Jahr aus der Mitte der Gruppe gewählt.

Vor der Wahl muß die Gruppe ausführlich über die Aufgaben, Rechte und Pflichten des Gruppensprechers/der Gruppensprecherin informiert werden. Eine Abwahl des Gruppensprechers/der Gruppensprecherin durch die Gruppe ist in geheimer Wahl mit einfacher Mehrheit jederzeit möglich.

Ein Stellvertreter/in wird auch in geheimer Wahl gewählt. Er/sie vertritt den/die Gruppensprecher/in bei Abwesenheit, insbesondere bei Krankheit, Urlaub etc.

Für die Dauer der Funktion des Gruppensprechers/der Gruppensprecherin wird ihm/ihr eine Zulage von DM 0,50 pro Stunde gezahlt, die auch der/die Vertreter/in ab der ersten Stunde für den eingesetzten Zeitraum erhält. Eine Anpassung der Zulage erfolgt bei Tarifierhöhungen.

Neben der völligen Einbindung in die Arbeit der Gruppe übernimmt der/die Gruppensprecher/in u. a. die folgenden Aufgaben:

- Motivieren der Gruppe
- Ausgleich von Meinungsverschiedenheiten
- Sicherstellung des Informationsaustausches
- Verfolgen der Gruppenziele
- Unterstützen des Meisters/der Meisterin
- Leitung der Gruppengespräche

Der/die Gruppensprecher/in erhält die erforderliche Zeit zur Erfüllung seiner/ihrer Aufgaben.

### **4. Funktion des der Meisters/in**

Die Gruppenarbeit erfordert eine Veränderung der Führungsaufgabe des/der Meisters/in. Schwerpunkte seiner/ihrer Führungsfunktion verlagern sich zur sozialen, pädagogischen Seite. Weitere Schwerpunkte sind:

- Betreuung seiner/ihrer Gruppen
- Vorgabe und Vereinbarung von Zielen
- Unterstützung der Gruppe zur Erreichung der Ziele
- Unterstützung der Gruppe bei der Festlegung von Maßnahmen, wenn erkennbar wird, daß die Zielerreichung in Frage gestellt ist
- Gruppen- und bereichsübergreifende Koordination und Kommunikation
- Informationsaustausch über die Gruppe hinaus
- Unterstützung bei Problemlösungen insbesondere im Rahmen des kontinuierlichen Verbesserungsprozesses (KVP)
- Unterstützung im Qualifizierungsprozeß
- Mitarbeiterbeurteilung
- Personaleinsatz

Der Personaleinsatz über die Gruppe hinaus obliegt der Verantwortung des Meisters/der Meisterin. Die Besetzung der einzelnen Arbeitsplätze innerhalb der Gruppe wird weitestgehend auf Vorschlag der Gruppe selbst geregelt und bestimmt. Der Meister/die Meisterin berät gegebenenfalls die Gruppe dabei.

### **5. Training**

Vor Beginn der Gruppenarbeit werden alle Beteiligten auf ihre zukünftigen Aufgaben vorbereitet.

Gruppensprecher/innen, Stellvertreter/innen und Meister/innen werden zusätzlich in Techniken zur Moderation, Konfliktbewältigung, Führungswissen u.ä. ausgebildet. Qualifizierungspläne werden in Zusammenarbeit mit dem Betriebsrat erstellt und bedürfen dessen Zustimmung.

Die Bereichsleitung stellt unter Beteiligung der Meister/innen im Rahmen der gegebenen Kapazität die Einhaltung und Durchführung dieser Qualifizierung sicher.

#### **6. Verbesserungsvorschläge**

Ein Verbesserungsvorschlag, der aus der Gruppe gemacht wird, gilt als Gruppenvorschlag und wird in der BV zum VV-Wesen geregelt.

#### **7. Mitwirkung und Mitbestimmungsrechte des Betriebsrates**

Um die Mitbestimmungsrechte wahrnehmen zu können, wird der Betriebsrat über alle Maßnahmen rechtzeitig informiert.

Die Rechte des Betriebsrates nach Gesetz, Tarifverträgen und Betriebsvereinbarungen bleiben unberührt.

#### **8. Einführung**

Geschäftsleitung und Gesamtbetriebsrat haben das Ziel, die Gruppenarbeit schnellstmöglichst in allen Bereichen der Adam Opel AG einzuführen. Dies erfolgt im Rahmen der vorstehenden Regelungen auf örtlicher Ebene in Abstimmung mit den Betriebsräten.

Die flächendeckende Einführung wird sich über einen längeren Zeitraum erstrecken. Geschäftsleitung und Gesamtbetriebsrat sind sich deshalb einig, daß Aufgaben und Ziele der Gruppenarbeit, so wie sie in Ziffer 2 beschrieben werden, sinngemäß in Bereichen angewendet werden, wo Gruppenarbeit noch nicht eingeführt ist.

#### **9. Verfahren bei Meinungsverschiedenheiten**

Die Lösung von Meinungsverschiedenheiten im Zusammenhang mit dieser Betriebsvereinbarung soll durch eine paritätisch besetzte Kommission geregelt werden.

#### **10. Inkrafttreten**

Die Betriebsvereinbarung tritt am Tage der Unterzeichnung in Kraft.

Die bisher geschlossenen Betriebsvereinbarungen zur Gruppenarbeit, Bochum BV-Nr. 18 vom 22.12.1988 und Kaiserslautern BV vom 18.09.1989, werden ab diesem Zeitpunkt durch diese BV außer Kraft gesetzt.

#### **11. Kündigung**

Die Betriebsvereinbarung kann mit 6.monatiger Frist zum Jahresende, erstmals zum 31.12.1993 gekündigt werden. Rüsselsheim, den 04. April 1991

## **The company agreement No. 179**

On 4. April 1991, Adam Opel AG and the works council reached an agreement regarding the introduction of team work. The agreement (Betriebsvereinbarung No. 179) applies to all General Motors operations in West Germany (excluding the Eisenach operation).

### **Introduction:**

To meet the challenge of competition and increase workers individual self-development within the frame of production, the company introduces team work. The essential aim of the team concept is continuous improvement, increase in flexibility and motivation.

If productivity increases and team sizes can be reduced, the leaving team member will be employed at a better or similar position within the company

### **1. Definitions:**

The introduction of team work applies to all workers at the Rüsselsheim, the Bochum, and the Kaiserslautern plant, as well as the experimental site at Dudenhofen.

### **2. Basic Principles of Team Work:**

The team size should range between 8 and 15 workers. Each team should accomplish its production tasks without a short time incorporation of external workers. Teams have following responsibilities:

- distribution of work among its members,
- regulation of rest time, team-meetings, health and safety improvements, job rotation, holiday planning,
- increase of motivation and satisfaction,
- production tasks and quality demands have to be met,
- compensation of production vacillation,
- costs of production,
- production and tool efficiency compensated by minor maintenance and machine fitting,
- continuous improvement for production,
- developing standardised work charts,
- installation of improved tools or production methods within the working area of the team
- ensure the information flows within the team and to the supervisor,
- training of new team members,
- integration of disabled workers,
- maintaining a clean and tidy work area,
- support creativity, innovations and independence of team members,
- participation on work tasks, conditions, production organisation, and working environment.

If team-meetings result in suggestions concerning personal changes, the works council need to approve this suggested changes.

Teams can neither test or examine team members, nor are job evaluation and efficiency measures responsibilities of the team.

Team-meetings are work related discussions up to one hour and should be on a weekly basis. Teams define the date of the meetings with regard to production, especially in the case of shift or area extending meetings. Team-meetings are held at normal working hours. Off work time meetings are paid as overtime. Teams are free to determine the subjects of team-meetings. Further, teams can, for specific questions, invite the necessary specialists, supervisors, and works councillors. Specialists, supervisors, and works councillors can on team approval introduce special issues in team-meetings.

Wages of team members are based on the company agreement No. 180 and apply to each member according to the working task.

To reach the goal of flexibility, team members should rotated among different jobs. The team has to ensure that each team member has the option of developing the necessary skills. The team cannot hinder any member from self improvement.

### **3. Team Speaker:**

The team speaker represents the team insides and outside of the team. s/he acts on behalf of the team and has no disciplinary or supervisor right. Secret elections (majority voting) for the team speaker are held among the team members on a six months (first election) and later on a one year basis. Previous to the election, the team is to inform about the duties,

rights and tasks of the team speaker. The term team speaker may end at any time through a majority of the team members in a secret election. A deputy team speaker has to be elected, who deputises for the team speaker during his/her absences. Team speakers receive an additional 20 p.c./hour. Deputies receive this payment during their acting time. The team speakers have the following responsibilities: Team motivation, moderator at team-meetings, information flow, reaching team tasks, support supervisors. s/he is provided with the necessary time for his/her duties. "Team speakers have no authority to discipline people.

#### **4. The Functions of Supervisors**

Team work changes the work of supervisors as well, hence his/her task shifts more towards social functions, as there are: Working together with teams, supporting teams to ensure the accomplishment of their tasks, supporting communication and co-ordination among teams and sections, supporting problem-solving processes, supporting qualification of team members, Personaleinsatz. Supervisors are responsible for changes of team members among teams, whereas the teams regulate internal team rotations and supervisors only may advise teams.

#### **5. Training:**

Previous to the introduction all workers will be prepared for team work. Team speakers, deputy team speaker, supervisors receive an additional communication training. Together with the works council training methods for qualifications will be developed. The works council need to approve this training schemes.

#### **6. Suggestions:**

Suggestions made by the team will be team suggestions and apply to the agreement concerning "Company Suggestions".

#### **7. Participation and Co-determination of the Works Council:**

To ensure the works council's ability of co-determination, it has to be informed about planned measures within a reasonable period of time previous. The rights of the works council based on collective and company agreements, laws, and other regulations remains untouched.

#### **8. Introduction:**

For Adam Opel AG and works council the target is the introduction of team work as soon as possible. Local adjustments with works councils need to be arranged. The company wide introduction of team work will be time consuming.

#### **9. Negotiations and Procedures:**

A committee of equal numbers (company and works council) will be installed to deal with all necessary negotiations concerning this agreement.

#### **10. Duration:**

This agreement will be in force on the 4. of April 1991 and my re-negotiated not before the 31. December 1993. With this agreement the Bochum team work agreement (22. December 1988) and the Kaiserslautern team work agreement (18.09.1989) will be discontinued.



## **Absprache zur BV Nr. 179 'Gruppenarbeit'**

### **Personalzuteilung bei Gruppenarbeit**

Geschäftsleitung und Gesamtbetriebsrat der Adam Opel AG treffen folgende Absprache zur Betriebsvereinbarung Nr. 179 (Gruppenarbeit):

Die Personalzuteilung bei Gruppenarbeit soll einfach und eindeutig sein. Sie soll sich an den realen Gegebenheiten orientieren. Die Zuteilung erfolgt auf Gruppenbasis.

#### **Rahmenbedingungen**

- Die rein rechnerische Umstellung zum neuen DV-System/Ermittlungsverfahren erfolgt personalneutral.
- Im neuen System erfolgt die Zuteilung des notwendigen Personals grundsätzlich nach 4 Hauptgruppen:

#### **a. Produktbezogene Tätigkeiten**

Produktbezogene Tätigkeiten sind Tätigkeiten mit tatsächlichen Arbeitswerten und der tatsächlichen Häufigkeit pro Schicht.

#### **b. Schichtzyklische Servicetätigkeiten**

Schichtzyklische Servicetätigkeiten sind z. B. Werkzeugwechsel Umbau, Ablösetätigkeiten und Reinigungsarbeiten.

Sie werden nicht mehr anteilig, sondern mit ihren tatsächlichen Werten und Häufigkeiten pro Schicht vorgegeben.

#### **c. Monatszyklische Servicetätigkeiten**

Monatszyklische Servicetätigkeiten sind z. B. Umbau, vorbeugende Instandhaltung und vorbereitende Tätigkeiten.

Sie werden pro Ereignis und Häufigkeit beschrieben und in ihrem Zeitbedarf aufgezeigt.

#### **d. Zusätzliche Tätigkeiten und Bedingungen**

sind z. B. Abwesenheit, Störungen, anteilige Helfertätigkeiten, Werkzeugumtausch, Anlernen, Training, Ausbildung, KVP und Gruppensprecherfähigkeit.

Als Basis für die Tätigkeiten a. - c. wird eine Durchschnittsleistung von 103 % pro Gruppe festgelegt.

Für Linienoperationen (Fließfertigung) mit überwiegendem MTM-Anteil erfolgt die Personalzuteilung auf Gruppen mit einer durchschnittlichen Leistung von 100 %. Diese Gruppenzuteilung kann bereits vor Einführung der Gruppenarbeit durchgeführt werden.

Nach gemeinsamem Verständnis kann die Auslastung auf die Gruppenleistung nach den notwendigen Flexibilisierungen / Qualifizierungen und gegebenenfalls technischen Umgestaltungen der Arbeitsplätze erzielt werden.

Bis dahin erfolgt eine Korrektur. Sollte sich das Personal pro Gruppe rechnerisch nicht auf volle Personen aufaddieren, wird auf Meisterebene ausgeglichen.

#### **Übergangszeit (Altes System und Gruppenarbeit)**

Komponenten-, Reparatur-, Nacharbeits-Bereiche außerhalb der Linie.

Die Zuteilung erfolgt auf heute bestehende Abteilungen bzw. Kostenkontrollstellen unter dem heute jeweils gültigen Überleistungsprozentsatz.

#### **Linienbereiche (Fließfertigung)**

Die Zuteilung erfolgt pro Gruppe mit durchschnittlich 103 % Überleistung (REFA) bzw. 100 % Leistung (MTM).

#### **Neues System**

Die zu regelnden Details des neuen Systems werden von der Paritätischen Kommission erarbeitet.

Rüsselsheim, den 04. April 1991

Die Geschäftsleitung

Der Gesamtbetriebsrat

## **Labour Distribution and Team Work**

The Adam Opel AG management and the works council reached the following agreement on 4 April 1991.

Rank and file distribution into teams should be simple and clear and should be adjusted to necessities. The detailed distribution is based on teams.

In the new system, the distribution of personal is based on four main groups:

**a) Production:**

Production oriented work is an activity, which has real production value and is based on its frequency per shift.

**b) Maintenance (cycle per shift):**

Shift cycled maintenance work is for example tool handling, fitting, and cleaning work in relation to its necessity per shift.

**c) Maintenance (cycle per month):**

Monthly maintenance service work is for example preventive maintenance and preparative activities should be indicated in its frequency and time.

**d) Additional Activities:**

This are absentees, interruptions of production, tool changing, assistance work, training, education, suggestions, and team-meetings.

The basic activity for a team (a to c) is defined with 103 percent per team. According to common understanding, the full productivity of a team can be accomplished after the necessary training and flexibilisation. Until this level of operation is reached, supervisors will compensated in the meantime. A committee of equal numbers (company and works council) will be installed to deal with all necessary negotiations concerning this agreement.

## **Betriebsvereinbarung Nr. 210**

### **Standortsicherung**

#### Anlage 3: Maßnahmen zur Kostenstrukturverbesserung

##### **Gruppenarbeit:**

- Freistellung des Gruppensprechers (kostenneutral)
- Die Gruppensprecher stehen neben den bisherigen Aufgaben für folgende Arbeiten zur Verfügung:
- Übernahme der Helfertätigkeit und Hilfe bei Taktüberschreitung
- Ablösung der persönlichen Verteilzeiten der Gruppenmitglieder
- Übernahme von Reparaturen und SOK
- Wahrnehmung weiterer Aufgaben im Rahmen des QNPS

Die Wahl der Gruppensprecher erfolgt aus einem Personenkreis, dessen fachliche und persönliche Eignung durch noch festzulegende Auswahlkriterien belegt wurde.

## **Company/Works Council Agreement No. 210**

### **Consolidation**

#### Appendix 3 (i.e. Team work): Measures for Cost Reduction

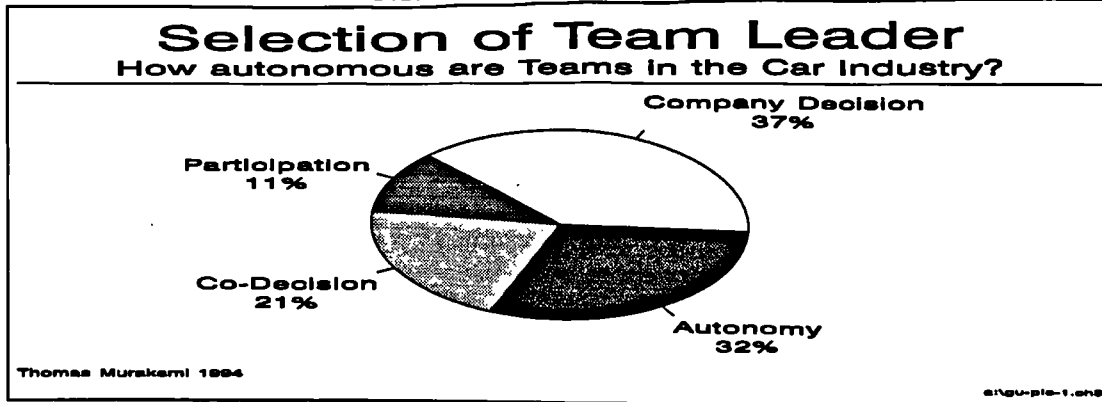
##### **Team Work:**

- The Team Speaker will be exempt from direct assembly work (at no extra cost for the company).
- In addition to the general duties of Team Speaker, s/he will have the following responsibilities:
- The Team Speaker will assist the Team in cases where the cycle time is exceeded.
- The Team Speaker will cover for absent Team Members.
- The Team Speaker takes responsibility for minor repairs
- The Team Speaker will carry out additional tasks in accordance with to the QNPS

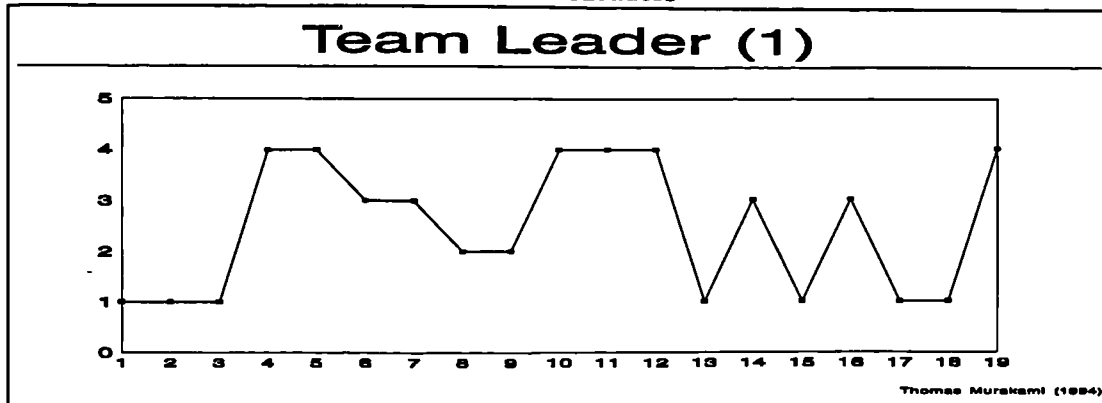
The Team Speaker will be elected from the Team and must meet the personnel and skill requirements, to be defined by subsequent arrangement.

# (N) Gulowsen

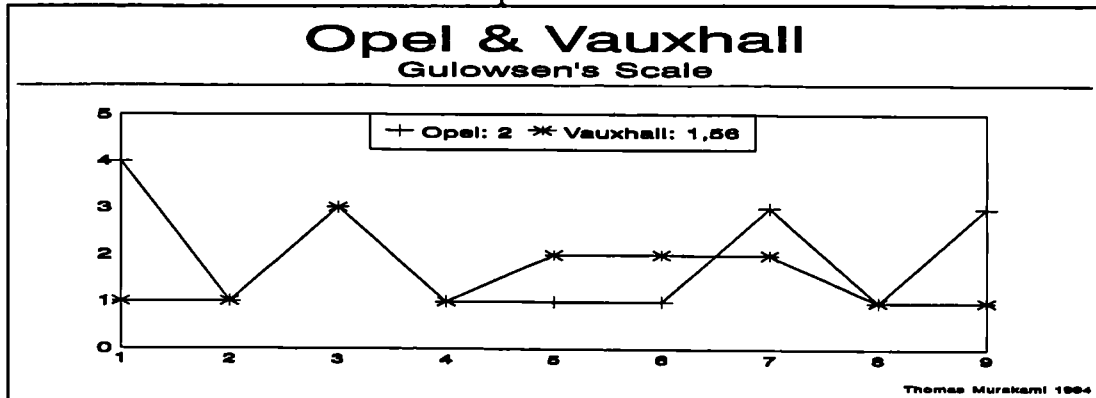
## N1: Selection of Teamleaders



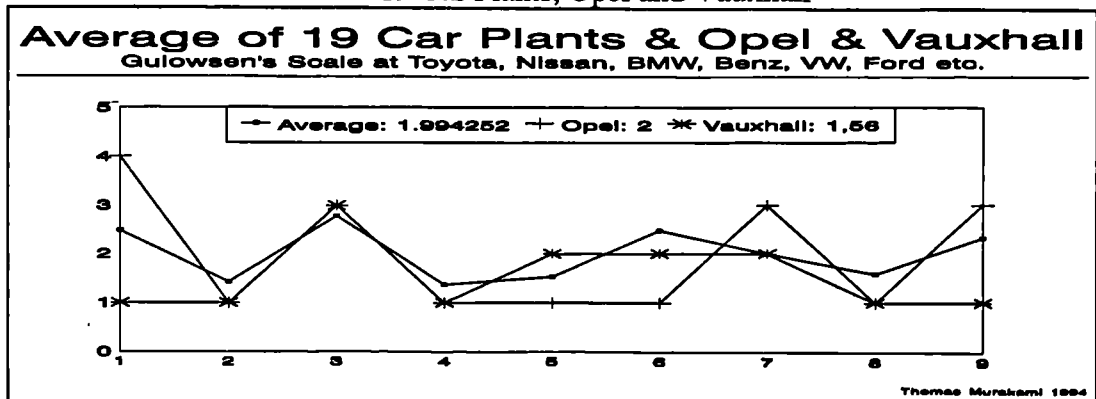
## N2: Teamleaders



## N3: Opel and Vauxhall



## N4: 19 Car Plants, Opel and Vauxhall



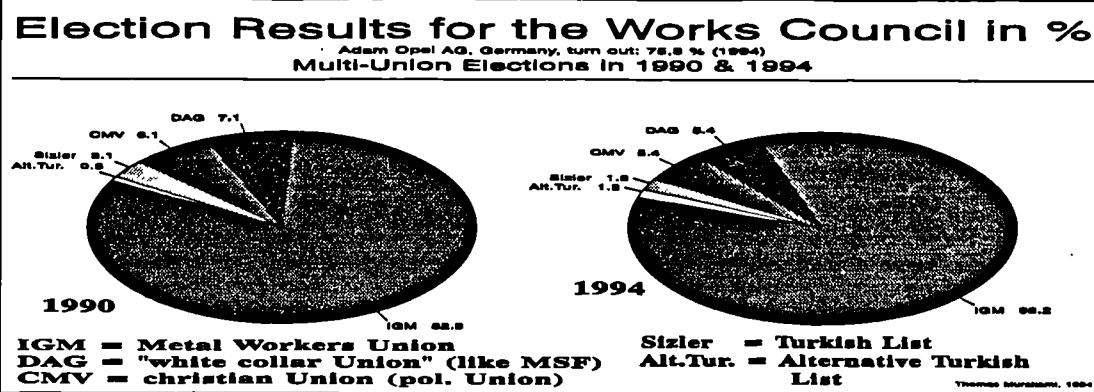
## **(O) List of Semi-structured Interviews**

- Böckel, Ulrich: "Works council member at GM's Eisenach plant", personal interview at 13. July 1993
- Casu, Guido 1993: "Section workplace representatives (Blocky)" at General Motors Rüsselsheim plant", personal interview on 10. August 1993
- Eglington, Michael D. 1992: "Manager Employee Relations and Personal Planning", Vauxhall Motors Luton Plant, personal interview on 3. December 1992
- Eglington, Michael D. 1993: "Manager Employee Relations and Personal Planning", Vauxhall Motors Luton Plant, personal interview on 4. March 1993
- Franz, Klaus 1993: "Full time works council member" (freigestellter Betriebsrat) for teamwork introduction at General Motors Rüsselsheim plant", personal interview on 26. January 1993
- Franz, Klaus 1993a: "Statements at Lenkungsausschuß meeting (steering committee) on teamwork", General Motors Rüsselsheim plant, Lenkungsausschuß Meeting on 12. July 1993
- Franz, Klaus 1993b: "Presentation at Works Meeting", General Motors Rüsselsheim plant, Meeting on 15. July 1993
- Franz, Klaus 1994: "Full time works council member" (freigestellter Betriebsrat) for team work introduction at General Motors Rüsselsheim plant", personal interview on 13. September 1994
- Garcia, Jose Luis 1994: "Deputy Convenor of the TGWU at the Vauxhall Motors Luton Plant", Personal Interviews between 1. and 4. November 1994
- Hart, Mark E 1993: "Quality Network Representative - Vauxhall Luton Plant", personal interview at Vauxhall Motors Ltd. on 2. March 1993
- Hasenauer, Karl-Heinz 1993: "Personal Interview with works council member (Paint Shop) at Adam Opel AG", Adam Opel AG, Rüsselsheim 30. June 1993
- Herber, Armin 1994: "Personal Interview with secretary (Referent) to the works council at Adam Opel AG", Adam Opel AG, Rüsselsheim 30. August 1994
- Hildmann, Manfred 1993: "Management project leader for introducing the team-concept at the General Motors Rüsselsheim plant (Manufacturing)", personal interview on 29. January 1993
- Jack, John 1992: "Convenor of the TGWU at the Vauxhall Motors Luton Plant", Personal Interviews between 1. and 6. December 1992
- Jack, John 1993: "Convenor of the TGWU at the Vauxhall Motors Luton Plant", Personal Interviews between 1. and 6. March 1993
- Jack, John 1994: "Convenor of the TGWU at the Vauxhall Motors Luton Plant", Personal Interviews between 1. and 4. November 1994
- Knapman, Dave 1994: "Employee Service Manager" at the Vauxhall Motors Luton plant, personal interview on 4. November 1994
- Kohlbacher, Uwe 1993: "Section workplace representatives (Blocky)", at General Motors Rüsselsheim plant", personal interview on 19. July 1993
- Lalji, Jack 1992: "Supervisor at the Door Module Section", at the Vauxhall Motors Luton plant, personal interview on 4. December 1992
- Lalji, Jack 1993: "Supervisor at the Door Module Section", at the Vauxhall Motors Luton plant, personal interview on 3. March 1993
- Longley, Michael 1994: "Convenor of the Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union at the Vauxhall Motors Luton Plant", Personal Interview on the 3. November 1994
- Mithunaga, Nobuo 1992: "Administrative Department, Nissan-Kyushu plant", Personal Interview on 5. September 1992

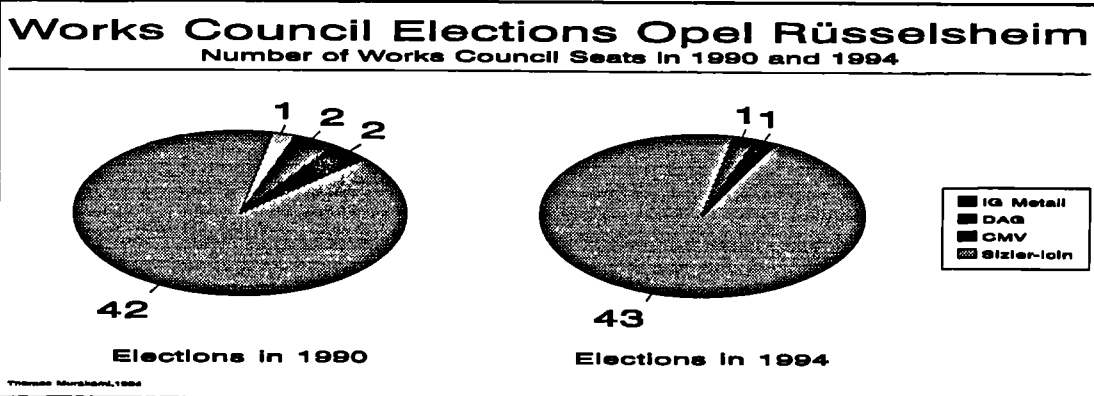
- Müller, Rudolf 1993: "Head of the works councils at Opel-Rüsselsheim (freigestellter Betriebsrat)", personal interview, Adam Opel AG, Rüsselsheim 28. July 1993
- Payne, Eric 1992: "Senior shop steward of the MSF union" at the Vauxhall Motors Luton plant, personal interview on 3. December 1992
- Payne, Eric 1993: "Senior shop steward of the MSF union" at the Vauxhall Motors Luton plant, personal interview on 4. March 1993
- Reitinger, Hans 1993: "Full time works councils member (OMEGA-line) at hall K 40" (freigestellter Betriebsrat), personal interview, Adam Opel AG, Rüsselsheim 28. January 1993
- Russell, Eric 1993: "Team member and operator" on the Door Module Section at the Vauxhall Motors Luton plant, personal interview on 4. March 1993
- Sadlier, George 1994: "Trade Union Chairman of the Transport and General Workers Union at the Vauxhall Motors Luton Plant", Personal Interviews between 1. and 4. November 1994
- Schischke, Roland 1993: "Statements during Lenkungsausschuß (steering committee) for the introduction of teamwork", General Motors Rüsselsheim plant (Department of Organisational Development), Lenkungsausschuß Meeting on 12. July 1993
- Seib, Karl-Heinz 1993: "Full time works councils member (OMEGA-line) at hall K 40" (freigestellter Betriebsrat), personal interview, Adam Opel AG, Rüsselsheim 26. January 1993
- Sigges, Dieter 1993: "Full time works councils member at the parts shop" (freigestellter Betriebsrat), personal interview, Adam Opel AG, Rüsselsheim 19. July 1993
- Sullivan, John 1993: "TGWU Shop Steward" on the Door Module Section at the Vauxhall Motors Luton plant, personal interview on 4. March 1993
- Vogel, Hans 1993: "Manager for the Introduction of the Team Concept at the Door Module Section at Adam Opel AG", Personal Interview at the General Motors Rüsselsheim plant, 27. January 1993
- Warman, Bruce 1993: "Director of Personnel" Vauxhall Motors Ltd. Luton, personal interview on 4. March 1993
- Wink, Gerhard 1993: "Full time works council member" (freigestellter Betriebsrat), personal interview, Adam Opel AG, Rüsselsheim, January 1993
- Wink, Gerhard 1993a: "Full time works council member" (freigestellter Betriebsrat), personal interview, Adam Opel AG, Rüsselsheim, August 1993
- Witte, Hans-Joachim 1993: "Full time Works councils member at the Door-Module Section" (freigestellter Betriebsrat), personal interview, Adam Opel AG, Rüsselsheim 24. June 1993
- Ziegler Gotthard 1993: "Works council member and convenor of workplace representative body" personal interview at Adam Opel AG, Rüsselsheim, January 1993

## (P) Tables and Graphs for Vauxhall and Opel

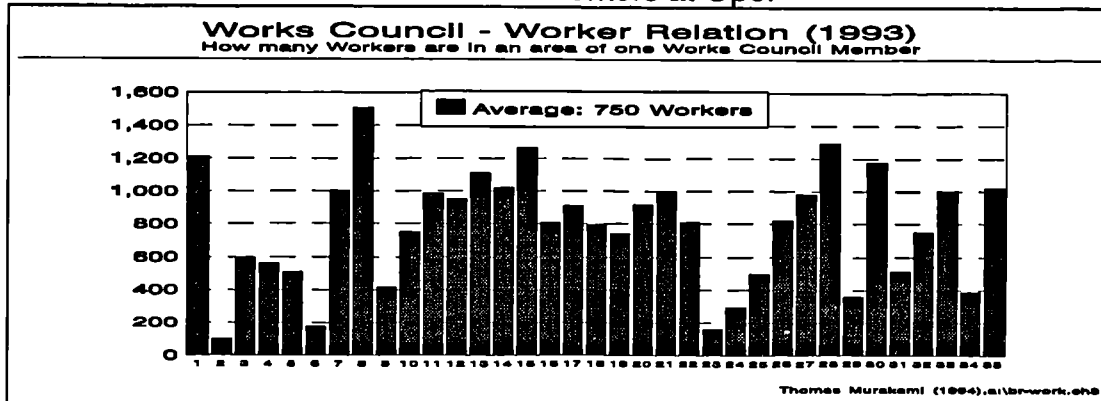
### P1: Opel's BR Elections



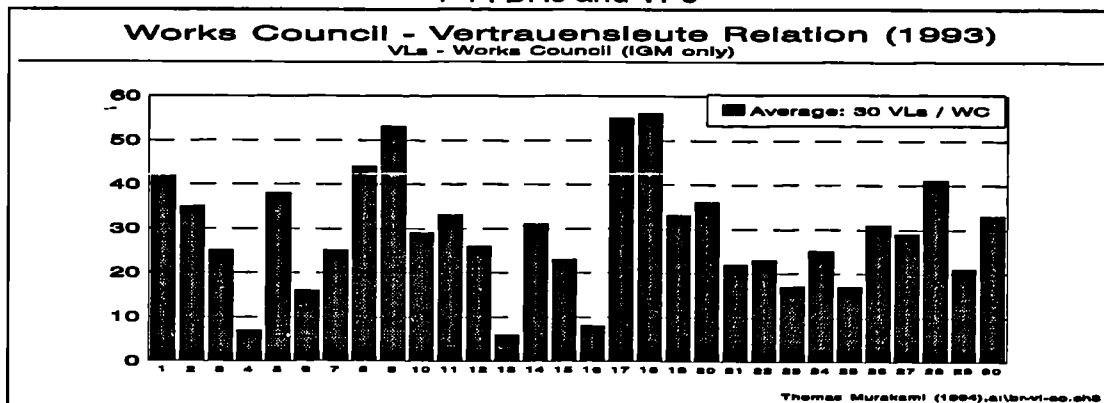
### P2: Election Results



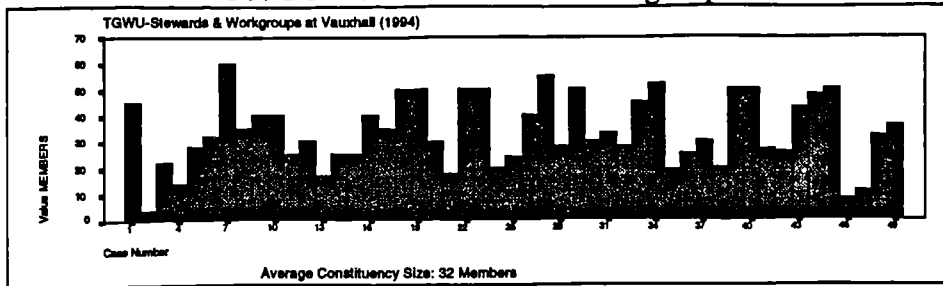
### P3: BR and Workers at Opel



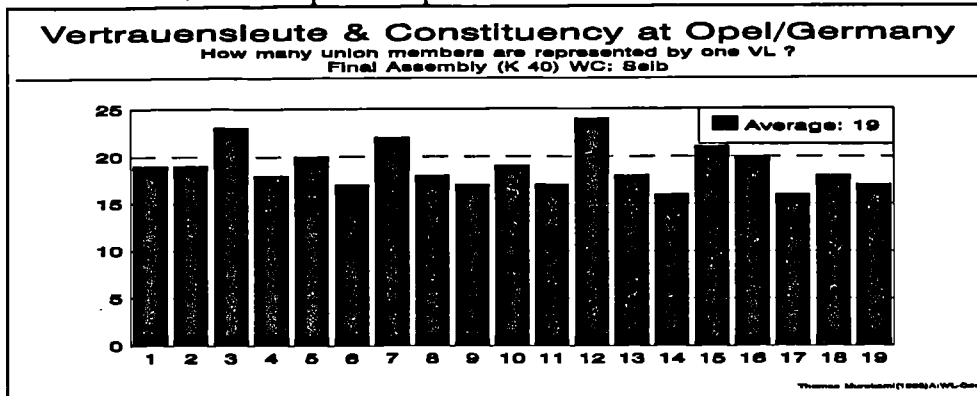
### P4 : BRs and VPs



### P5: TGWU-Stewards and Workgroups



### P6: Workplace Representatives & Consituencies



### P7: Works Council-Members & Workers

**Representation & BetrVG**

Average amount of Workers represented by one WC and full-time WC

Workers	WCs	full-time WC
1000	91	500
2000	134	667
3000	158	750
4000	174	800
5000	185	834
7000	241	875
9000	290	900
12000	364	858
15000	429	833
18000	486	1000
21000	538	1000
24000	585	1091
27000	628	1125
30000	667	1200

61/96-24-12

The graph shows, that if a company has 1000 workers one part-time works council-member has to represent 91 and a full-time works council-member 500. If the number of workers increases to 30,000 one part-time works council-member represents 667 workers and a full-time works council-member 1,200. In other words, when the size of a company in terms of workers increases, the ration between works council-members and workers is increasingly to their disadvantage.



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